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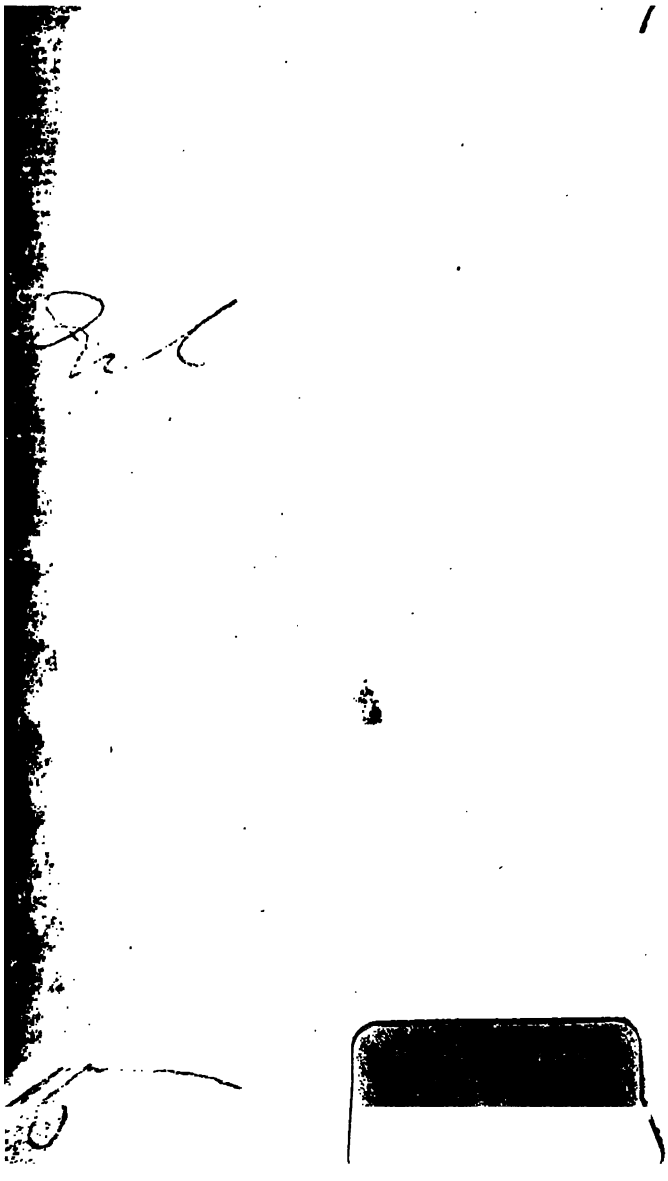

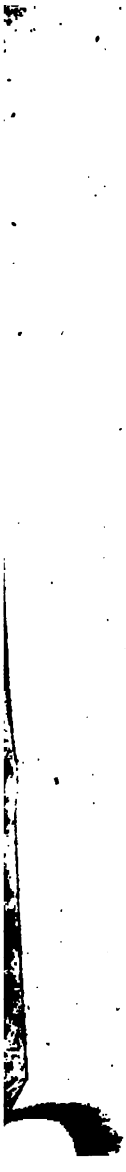

THE

MASQUERADE.

VOL. I.

THE MASQUERADE;

OR, THE HISTORY OF LORD AVON AND MISS TAMEWORTH.

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

VOL. I.

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THE MASQUERADE.

LETTER I.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

SUCH a tranſporting adventure, Ned! why were you not in town; and how could you, poſſibly, contrive to be at a diſtance from the capital, when ſo brilliant an entertainment was to be given:—by a youthful monarch too; from the generoſity of whoſe diſpoſition, and from the elegance of whoſe taſte, you might be aſſured of ſeeing that entertainment in its higheſt perfection?

But, to my own ſhare in it.

As I have no paſſion for theſe extravagant diverſions, which may be called, not improperly, I think, ridiculous, you may ſuppoſe that I was not in the leaſt inclined to enter into the true ſpirit of a maſquerade. I would not, indeed, take the trouble or be at the expence of appearing in any particular character: and, therefore, only dreſſed myſelf in a domino. I went later than the reſt of my acquaintance to the Opera-houſe; ſo that before I got thither moſt of the company were unmaſked.

I was, I confeſs, unexpectedly ſtruck with the magnificence of the decorations, and the taſte as well as richneſs diſplayed in the dreſſes around me. For a-while my attention was diſtracted, by the variety of figures on all ſides, but it was ſoon fixed.—So beautiful a young creature I never beheld!—my raviſhed eyes were rivetted on her—nor was I ſingular with my looks; the whole room gazed at her with admiration. She was formed in the moſt delicate ſtyle to be conceived, and her face was animated

mated by a clear and glowing complexion. Her dark eyes now dazzled you with their brightneſs, and now melted your ſoul with their bewitching languor. She had fine auburn hair, long thick eye-laſhes of the ſame hue, a Grecian noſe, and a mouth—I will not attempt to deſcribe her mouth, conſcious of my inability to do it juſtice with the utmoſt exertion of my deſcriptive powers. But after all I have ſaid about her perſonal charms, they would have been inſufficient to captivate my heart, without ſome ſweet accompanyments, which rendered them ſtill more enchanting!—a good underſtanding and a good heart were ſtrongly viſible in her expreſſive countenance; and when I converſed with her, the graceful ſimplicity in her language, and the melody of her voice, almoſt drove me out of my ſenſes. I was for ſome moments loſt in rapture—Do I not write like one of the enamoured train?—I have not, however, told you yet how I came to be ſo ſoon acquainted with all theſe charms.—

Hold—I muſt in the firſt place, deſcribe her dreſs.

She was in a plain white luteſtring kind of jacket and petticoat, which ſhewed the ſymmetry of her ſhape to the greateſt advantage; it was buttoned down with diamonds before, and at the wriſts; while the ſofteſt, whiteſt hand in the world, and a neck as white and as poliſhed, were adorned with the fineſt lace. Her hair, which grew very luxuriantly, was partly turned up: the remainder of it was unconfined; that in front ſtrayed over her ſnowy forehead, that behind waved on her neck, in careleſs ringlets, only diſcoverable thro' a veil of tranſparent gauſe, ſpotted with ſilver, which ſhe ſometimes permitted to obſcure her beauties for a moment, as if ſhe ſtudied to quicken the eagerneſs of her beholders.—When ſhe threw it back on a ſudden, ſhe ſeemed to emerge like the ſun, from a cloud, to appear with redoubled ſplendor.

Gueſs

Gueſs my ſurprize, when I found, upon enquiry, that ſhe was niece to Sir William Tameworth, whom he had juſt brought up from Derbyſhire, deſigning her for his ſon, hourly expected from his travels!—You cannot imagine, Mountney, how this intelligence alarmed me.—I had heard much of this Miſs Tameworth's being a very fine girl, tho' I never ſaw her before. She is the only daughter of Sir William's eldeſt brother, who died without a male heir. Her fortune is thirty thouſand pounds—Her uncle has juſt brought her to town; ſhe was never in London before, having lived with her grandfather ſince the death of her father. Her firſt appearance in public was on the above-mentioned remarkable night.

I was, as I ſaid before, alarmed; I was indeed exceſſively ſhocked at hearing that a creature, who had made ſuch an impreſſion upon my heart in ſo rapid a manner, ſhould be already deſtined to a man, of whom ſhe, according to my intelligence,

knew very little, as they had been educated at a diſtance from each other, and in a very different ſtyle: the one in retirement, and the other in the world.

As ſoon as I began to converſe with this angel, having introduced myſelf by renewing my acquaintance with lady Tameworth, with whom my family were once upon an intimate footing, I grew half mad to think that I might never have another opportunity to ſpeak to her again, with the ſame freedom, as her couſin was expected every hour; and as the marriage was to be celebrated immediately upon his arrival.

Whether the racking diſquietude of my mind was viſible in my face, I cannot affirm, but this lively girl's bewitching familiarity, (bewitching from the innocence of it!) increaſed my paſſion for her to ſuch a degree, that the thoughts of only parting with her at the breaking up of the houſe, gave me inexpreſſible uneaſineſs: but the dread of loſing her for ever, became almoſt inſupportable

portable — I, therefore, endeavoured to make ſome efforts to move her heart in my favour. Had ſhe not been thus kept up on purpoſe for George Tameworth, my rank and fortune would have given me the faireſt pretenſions to demand her of her uncle; but I well know that Tameworth is too much bent on money, to let a thirty thouſand pounder go out of his family. What, then, was to be done? Something was to be done directly—not a ſingle moment was to be loſt. I had not even time nor opportunity to win her over to my party—general gallantry was only in my power, while the eyes of the admiring crowd were fixed on ſo new and ſo bright a divinity.

In conſequence of repeated diſappointments, I ſlipped out of the room, and having given proper inſtructions to Bingley, who has, you know, attended me from my infancy, and who has been a very ſerviceable fellow to me on many occaſions, returned to the blooming Eudocia, for ſo

lady Tameworth called her lovely niece—I then plied her ladyſhip with a profuſion of flattering civilities, and engaged colonel Edwards alſo, (who was of my party for the evening) to treat her with as much gallantry as he could poſſibly laviſh upon her.

Lady Tameworth is ſtill a fine figure, and infinitely more vain and giddy than many women not half ſo old—She was, therefore, highly pleaſed with Edwards' aſſiduities, who paid them very chearfully, as he is never, he ſays, more agreeably employed than when he is humming an old toaſt; that is, in making her believe he is extremely ſmitten with her; and as he thought, that I only deſired him to engage the old one, in order to have a little converſation with the young one. I certainly requeſted his aſſiſtance with that view, tho' I ſaid nothing to her during the evening which required a whiſper, to prevent ſuſpicion; and even forbore, earneſtly as I longed, to dance with her, be-

cauſe

cauſe I would not appear too particular; yet I hovered about her in ſuch a manner, that I kept all my rivals at a diſtance, according to my wiſhes.—The ſweet girl contributed to my ſatisfaction, by the envied preference ſhe ſeemed to give me.

Oh! Mountney! Never was there ſuch an angelic creature.—

When the time of their departure from the houſe drew near, I only begged ſhe would permit me to conduct her to her chair. She put her hand into mine, with a look expreſſive of ſo much pleaſure and confidence, that I actually trembled at feeling that I was going to deceive her—yet there was no other way left. I had nothing for it but to make a bold puſh, or to loſe her for ever.

"I will follow with your niece," ſaid I, in a whiſper to lady Tameworth, who was led out by Edwards.

I did ſo, but my lovely charge was by my direction put into a chair, which Bing-

ley had ſecured, and which was guarded by people in my ſervice.

I kept cloſe behind in another.

We were ſoon ſet down in a private ſtreet—my poſt-chariot waited, with two ſervants armed, tho' a few yards off.

Quitting my own chair, and advancing to that which contained my charming prize, I offered my hand to aſſiſt her in ſtepping into the chariot.

"Where are we going, my lord?" ſaid ſhe, looking upon me with an unſuſpecting ſmile.

"You ſhall know in a moment, madam," ſaid I, lifting her into the carriage: "but don't ſtop, you will take cold coming out of ſo crowded a houſe."

I then ſeated myſelf by her ſide, drew up the glaſſes, and held her ſoft hand in mine, which trembled exceſſively; ſo fearful was I leſt we ſhould be diſcovered and overtaken! ſtill more fearful leſt ſhe ſhould be diſpleaſed at my daring attempt, and unhappy in being decoyed in ſuch a manner

manner from her relations. I told her what I felt the firſt moment I beheld her, and to what a pitch my deſpair roſe, when I found, upon enquiry, that ſhe was deſtined to the arms of another man—adding, that I had no other way to alleviate the miſery, which I endured on ſuch killing intelligence, but to ſecure her perſon; ſwearing ſolemnly, at the ſame time, that ſhe ſhould be thrown into no diſagreeable, no dangerous ſituation, but treated with the utmoſt kindneſs, conſideration, tenderneſs and reſpect; and concluding with aſſuring her, that I had taken ſo irregular a ſtep only to have an opportunity of proſtrating myſelf at her feet, and to endeavour by every aſſiduous attention, to pleaſe her, to charm her, and to win her to return my love.—

But I hear her voice—I muſt lay down my pen—The continuation of my narrative in my next.

LETTER II.

From the ſame to the ſame.

I LEFT off at the concluſion of my firſt addreſs to my lovely girl, who ſat ſurprized, indeed, yet ſeemingly fearleſs, by my ſide—She looked on me—(for it began to be day-break, and there was light enough for us to ſee each other)—She looked at me with aſtoniſhment; but no diſpleaſure appeared in her love-inſpiring eyes.—She only replied, "What will Sir William and my lady ſay to this? and how do you expect to eſcape their reſentment, ſuppoſing you were certain of not incurring mine?"

"I truſt entirely to your mercy and your pity, my charming Miſs Tameworth," ſaid I, "for your pardon; and as to your family, when you are firmly mine by all the ties of love and honour; they may be offended

fended for a ſhort time, but not all the powers on earth can diſunite us, if you will only conſent to let me call you my wife.—My birth and fortune are not, indeed, to be put in competition with your uncommon attractions.—I only mention them, as they, poſſibly, would procure me the approbation of your uncle and aunt, were they not already prejudiced in favour of their ſon; but if he has not yet gained your heart, may I not, from my conſtant, my unwearied ſollicitude to pleaſe you, hope to make, one day, an impreſſion upon it?"

"You will ſtand the faireſt chance of ſucceeding with me, my lord," replied ſhe with ſpirit, "by carrying me back to my uncle, and aſking his permiſſion to ſee me, and then leaving it to me to determine."

"Heaven, who knows the ſincerity of my intentions," anſwered I, "knows alſo that your uncle will reject every offer, in order to make way for his ſon; and that, if I carry you back, I muſt never hope

to

to ſee you again, but in the arms of another."

"He cannot oblige me to marry," ſaid ſhe, "without my conſent."

"He has great power, my adorable Miſs Tameworth," ſaid I; "you are not of age; your uncle has, conſequently, all the right of a parent and guardian over you: and if I reſtore you to him, he will certainly not only refuſe my offers, but avail himſelf of the ſtep I have taken, to forbid you the ſight of me for ever—And can I, poſſibly, my lovely Eudocia, added I, preſſing her hand, ſupport ſuch a prohibition?"

She ſurveyed me again attentively, yet not with any apparent diſpleaſure—Something like a heavenly ſmile overſpread her fine features—But, tho' I continued to urge her to liſten to me, I obtained no ſatisfactory reply—ſhe did not, however, look either offended or diſconcerted; ſecure in her own unſullied innocence ſhe ſat unmoved: while I redoubled my attention

to

to render her little journey as agreeable as poſſible, to which ſhe made no oppoſition.

" Whither, in the name of wonder, did you carry her?"

Why to Sedley's; he purchaſed a houſe, you know juſt before he went to Paris, a few miles from town, when he left directions with his people to have it repaired and ornamented to his own taſte; he deſired me to ſtop, on riding that way, and look at it. I had taken a view of it more than once, and finding it fit for his reception, ſeized the fortunate moment of his abſence, to carry my new-found treaſure thither; as we ſhould be much leſs ſuſpected than at either of my own houſes.

At this place, then, we arrived—I led my charming companion into a parlour, to which all kinds of refreſhment were immediately brought—I begged her to take ſome that ſhe liked beſt, and at the ſame time told her a ſervant waited to conduct her to an apartment, proper for her repoſe, when ſhe choſe to retire; as I

was afraid that ſhe very much wanted reſt. I intreated her alſo to look upon herſelf, as miſtreſs of the houſe, and every thing about her; particularly of me, as ſhe had an abſolute power over me, and all in my poſſeſſion.

She drank one diſh of tea, and ate a little piece of bread and butter; but ſeemingly with compoſure.

When I rang the bell for a ſervant to attend her, I told her that I hoped ſhe would find every thing as agreeable as I wiſhed.

She left me with a half ſmile, which added a thouſand beauties to her already but too lovely face.

When Loyd, my houſe-keeper in town, whom I had ordered by Bingley to attend here, returned to me, after having undreſſed her, ſhe informed me that ſhe ſaid little, but appeared to be in a flutter of ſpirits—"She is the ſweeteſt young creature," added Loyd, "that I ever beheld with my eyes."

I went

I went to bed, and endeavoured to calm my agitated mind, but I could not ſleep. My impatience to ſee her again—the dear cauſe of all my anxiety, would not ſuffer me to cloſe my eye-lids—I quitted my pillow, therefore, much ſooner than I had intended, and ſpent the time in dreſſing myſelf to the greateſt advantage.

While I was ſo employed, I recollected that this dear girl, whom I had hurried away from her family, had no change of linnen or cloaths—She had only her maſquerade dreſs; which, tho' infinitely becoming, might not, I thought, be the dreſs ſhe would chuſe to put on when ſhe waked; accordingly I made Loyd ſend one of the men immediately to town, with neceſſary orders.

It is impoſſible for me to deſcribe the eagerneſs with which I waited for her riſing—It was full ſeven in the morning, before ſhe was in a ſituation to take any reſt—She was not awake at five in the afternoon. The dear angel, believing herſelf

the leaſt affectation did ſhe diſcover: not the leaſt apprehenſion—She only looked innocently at me now and then; while loſt in tranſport, at ſeeing her ſo unexpectedly compoſed, I feaſted my eyes with her whole figure; which grew, I thought, more and more beautiful after every ſurvey of it.—She had, ſomehow, contrived to keep her hair pretty much in the form it was before ſhe went to bed; ſhe had only, inſtead of wearing the ſilvered gauze as a veil, twiſted it in the ſhape of a turban, leaving the ends to hang careleſsly down her neck.—By this new diſpoſition, ſhe gave her face a more majeſtic air, and threw indeed a dignity over her whole perſon, which made it exquiſitely attractive.

As to myſelf, diſſolved in admiration, I forgot to eat and drink, to do any thing, indeed, but wait on her. She took notice, however, of my inattention to the ſcene before us, and had the good nature to aſk me if I was ill.

"You

"You alone, madam," replied I, "engroſs my thoughts—if you can find any thing you like, I ſhall be happy: and I flatter myſelf, from the delightful ſerenity of your behaviour, that you are not totally diſpleaſed with me for what I have done—I even venture to beg your permiſſion, to hope that your reſidence with me, will give you, one day, as tranſporting a ſatisfaction as I, this moment, receive from it, and as I muſt ever receive from it."

"I can ſay nothing to that, my lord, till I have heard my uncle's opinion: he, alone, has a right to diſpoſe of me."

"I am but too ſenſible of his authority, my charming Miſs Tameworth," ſaid I: "but tho' he has, undoubtedly, a right to give his opinion, he has none to direct your choice; nor is it in the power of our relations to make us like or diſlike, juſt as they pleaſe; tho' they influence or prejudice us greatly by their perſuaſions and admonitions.—Only, therefore, give me the ſlighteſt reaſon to hope that I may, poſſibly,

poſſibly, be ſo fortunate as to render myſelf agreeable to you; only tell me that you do not hate me, my lovely Eudocia, added I, preſſing her hand, with an impaſſioned look in which my fond ſoul's every ardent wiſh was, I am ſure, ſtrongly painted, and I will be ſatisfied, till you are inclined to grant me more ſubſtantial indulgences."

She fixed her lovely eyes ſteadfaſtly on me when I began to open my lips, but towards the concluſion of my ſpeech, threw them down: a gentle ſigh heaved her ſnowy breaſt. Looking up again, ſhe with an enchanting ſmile, replied, "I do not hate you, Sir: I do not hate any body: you may, therefore, baniſh all fears of that kind."

"Perhaps, then," ſaid I, eagerly, "perhaps you love your couſin George?"

"How!" anſwered ſhe, with the moſt bewitching vivacity, "muſt we always neceſſarily love thoſe whom we do not hate?—however, with regard to my couſin, I cer-

I certainly feel neither affection nor abhorrence. I have not ſeen him ſince I was ten years old; and the laſt time I ſaw him was ſix years ago—You cannot, therefore, ſuppoſe that I ſhould be violently in love with him."

"Not in love with him at all, I hope, my angel—Let me by my unwearied efforts to gain your dear innocent heart, make the attempts of every man who would ſoften it in his favour, unſucceſsful. Did you but know how fervently I wiſh to make your heart throb with emotions reſponſive to mine; could you but conceive what torments I ſhall feel, if I am not bleſt with the completion of my wiſhes; you would, I dare be certain, commiſerate my ſituation."

Here I ſtopped; waiting for her anſwer.

Her enchanting eyes were, a ſecond time, directed to the floor—Then, gently withdrawing her hands, which I held, and turning her face towards me, which had been for ſome moments averted, ſhe ſaid,

"I am

"I am going to write to my uncle—when I receive his anſwer, I will tell you what I think."

Alarmed, beyond expreſſion, at that anſwer, I cried, "For heaven's ſake, my deareſt angel, don't deſtroy me at one blow: don't cruſh my fond hopes, before you allow me time to gain your eſteem—If you write to Sir William, madam, I am for ever loſt—He muſt, then, know where you are; he will, of courſe, tear you from me, and I muſt be eternally miſerable.

I ſpoke with energy, for my heart was on my lips. I felt myſelf exceſſively diſordered—I let her hand, which I had again ſeized, drop, and could not ſupport the agitation into which ſhe had thrown me.—I roſe up to walk about the room, that I might ſtifle my emotions; but I could not get the better of them.—I returned, and flinging myſelf at her feet, begged with all the eloquence I was maſter of, not to drive me to deſpair—"Allow me but time," ſaid I—"You do not yet

yet know the man whom you would render everlaſtingly wretched—Could you but ſee my heart, which beats for you alone; a heart never touched by love before—could you but be ſenſible with what reſpectful tenderneſs I adore you, ſurely you would not diſtract me in this cruel manner—

Perceiving the tremor I was in, ſhe kindly raiſed me from the ground, by extending her hand, and deſired me to ſit by her.

I did ſo, purſued my purpoſe, and ſtrove to melt her ſoul to pity and to love.

She heard me with attention, and then replied, with an ineffable ſweetneſs, "Well, my lord, if my writing to Sir William will give you ſo much uneaſineſs, I will relinquiſh my deſign; but I muſt ſend a letter to a friend I have in Derbyſhire, to whom I promiſed to write, as ſoon as I got to London."

Again I trembled.

"May I preſume," ſaid I, kiſſing her dear hand, which ſhe did not withdraw, "may I, after ſo obliging a compliance, aſk if your friend is of your own ſex?—And dare I hope, alſo, that you will not drop the leaſt hint about the place at which you at preſent reſide. I could with more compoſure bear the ſtroke of death, than the loſs of your ſociety."

She ſmiled in a manner, which made her look doubly alluring—"You ſhall ſee the direction of my letter," ſaid ſhe, "tho' I aſſure you it will be to a female friend: and as to the diſcovery of the place, to which you have brought me, it is entirely out of my power; for I am totally a ſtranger to the ſpot.—But I will go up ſtairs, and write now."—

I let her go, tho' I could have detained her for ever; and tried to amuſe myſelf, in her abſence, with a book.—I could not read—I, therefore, ſat down to write to you—As Sedley will, I know ſee you, as ſoon as he comes from Paris, ſhew him

what

what I have already written, and tell him that I muſt borrow his houſe for a while; tell him at the ſame time, however, that I cannot ſuffer him to ſee Eudocia, till I have made her mine by the ſtrongeſt, by indiſſoluble ties.

LETTER III.

From the ſame to the ſame.

WHILE my angel was buſy with her pen, I revolved in my mind every thing that had paſſed between us; and upon the ſtricteſt ſcrutiny into Eudocia's behaviour, began to think that it was rather, on the whole, encouraging than forbidding; more calculated to inſpire me with hope, than to depreſs me with deſpondence.—The reſult of this ſcrutiny threw my ſpirits into ſuch an agreeable agitation, that I hurried to meet her, when ſhe came down to ſupper, with tranſport, which ſeemed to be participated.

I ventured to complain of the diſquietude which ſhe, by abſenting herſelf ſo long from me, had made me endure.

She ſmiled, and, with a lively air, holding out her letter, ſaid, "This is my apology"—

logy"—"There," continued ſhe, ſeeing me look earneſtly at it; "there is the addreſs, my lord."

I caught it, and having preſſed it to my lips, read, in the prettieſt hand; "To Miſs Olivia Heber."

"Will you not favour me with the care of it, my deareſt angel?"—

"May I truſt you;" ſaid the charming girl, with a laugh—

"By all my hopes of happineſs you may—If you have kept your word with me, you may depend upon my honour."

"There, then—but let it be ſent directly.—Hold—I will not deceive you—I have told to what place to ſend an anſwer."

"How," cried I, ſtarting with ſurprize, "you do know, then, where you are."

"No, indeed," replied ſhe, colouring, and looking as if ſhe wiſhed I would believe her: "but I have heard my uncle mention a coffee-houſe which he uſes, and I deſired Olivia to direct for me at it."—

See, Ned, ſee how ready a woman's invention is!—Yet with what an innocent countenance, in which appeared a timid apprehenſion, leſt ſhe ſhould have made me uneaſy, did ſhe look up in my face; and with what a pretty mincing voice did ſhe ſay, "I thought you could ſend ſomebody to fetch my letter from that coffee-houſe, who might not be known even to the people belonging to it—and I have ordered her to direct only to A. B," continued ſhe, bluſhing exceſſively.

"My charming Miſs Tameworth," ſaid I, ſnatching her to my boſom, in ſpite of her reſiſtance, "You have given me new life.—But where, my dear Eudocia, did you learn ſo much contrivance? Surely you have already had a favoured lover, and he has taught you ſo much ingenuity."

"No, indeed," anſwered ſhe, quite abaſhed,—"but my grandfather had the newspapers ſent down to him, and I have often ſeen advertiſements about letters, which were written by people who ſigned only initials.

initials. I therefore thought I might avail myſelf of that manner of writing, in order to keep my word with you, and at the ſame time, not deny myſelf the pleaſure of hearing from my friend."

"Sweet girl," exclaimed I, preſſing her again to my boſom—"how exquiſitely good; how ſhall I return my acknowledgments!"

"By letting me go," ſaid ſhe, breaking from me with a delicious confuſion, "and by not expecting more from me than you ought."

I complied immediately: ſhe then ſat down to ſupper, with a chearfulneſs and eaſe in her manner which filled me with ecſtatic ſenſations, and entered into the moſt lively and agreeable chat imaginable.—When I, however, almoſt tranſported out of myſelf, ventured to mention my paſſion, and to engage her to promiſe to be only mine; ſhe put me by, and made my importunity an excuſe for her retiring earlier than ſhe would, I believe, other-

wiſe have done.—Yet ſhe parted not from me in anger—She offered me her hand, at my requeſt, when I wiſhed her a good night.

Now, Ned, laying all things together, I grow more and more animated by hope.—If, after all, I ſhould never be able to win,—to keep her heart!—I dare not run my thoughts that way—"that way madneſs lies."

LETTER

LETTER IV.

Miſs TAMEWORTH to Miſs OLIVIA HEBER.

WHAT difficulties have I ſurmounted, in order to keep my promiſe to you!—But the ſtrangeſt affair has happened. I actually don't know whether I have ſpirits left to tell you—However, I'll ſee what I can do—

Two days after my arrival in Hill-Street, all the world was preparing to go to the king of Denmark's maſquerade—Not a creature came to my uncle's who did not talk of dreſſes and tickets, and being ſqueezed to death, to my aunt, who was as much engaged upon the occaſion as any girl could poſſibly have been in contriving a fancy-dreſs for an entertainment, which was to be ſo elegant and ſuperb.—You muſt know, now, that I was as wild to go as the reſt; but being, in a manner, a

ſtranger to my lady, I was afraid to aſk for ſuch a favour—

On the morning of the very day, while my uncle and aunt were ſitting after breakfaſt, talking of who was and who was not to be at the ball, with major Walworth, a friend of my uncle's, one of the beſt natured old men you ever ſaw; I ran up ſtairs to fetch ſomething for my lady. Seeing her dreſs, which had been juſt brought home, ſpread out upon the back of a ſopha by Mrs. Crofts, her woman, who was admiring it; I catched it up, and throwing it over my ſhoulder, (at the ſame time taking off my cap, twiſting a piece of gauze which lay on her dreſſing-table round my hair, and putting on my aunt's maſk) walked down to the parlour, laughing all the way to think how they would ſtare.

When I opened the door my lady ſcreamed; Sir William laughed heartily; and the major, twitching off my maſk, ſaid

ſaid to my lady, "You ſee, madam, how well ſhe becomes her dreſs."

"Bleſs me, child," cried my aunt, "what have you done? you will tumble my domino—run—run and pull it off."

"Let her rather wear it for life," replied the major, "for ſhe looks exceſſively well in it.—

"Do I,—indeed?—Why then my dear uncle," ſaid I, advancing to him, and tapping his cheek, "if I had ſuch another I would go along with you:" that is, added I, looking very demure, and making a low curtſy to her, "if my lady is pleaſed to let me."

"My lady muſt let you," ſaid the major: "'tis an amuſement only fit for ſuch pretty young creatures—Come, madam," continued he, turning to her ladyſhip, "order a dreſs for her: ſhe may never have an opportunity of ſeeing ſo fine a ſight again."

"Fie, major," replied my good aunt, "you will abſolutely ſpoil the girl."

My uncle called me a coaxing little huſſey.

In ſhort, my lady was ſo ſtrongly intreated to take me with her to the Haymarket, that ſhe, at laſt, conſented; and I flew up ſtairs after her, to conſult about my dreſs, which was to be as ſlight as poſſible, that it might be the ſooner finiſhed. The habit-maker was ſent for, and a white luteſtring jacket, with a veil of ſpotted gauze, were, at laſt, pitched upon. I happened to have ſome diamond buttons which had been my mother's; I was quite delighted with the thoughts of ſhining away with them, and wiſhed for the evening with an impatience not to be deſcribed.

And now, my ſweet Olly, ſuppoſe me juſt entered into the houſe—Never was any creature more aſtoniſhed and charmed than I was at that juncture — The ſplendor which ſurrounded me far exceeded all my conceptions about it; and the brilliant, the magnificent appearance which

which the company made, more than dazzled my eyes, it almoſt deprived me of my ſenſes. I never expected to have ſeen ſuch an enchanting paradiſe on earth—I ſaw a thouſand charming figures—I heard a thouſand clever things,—I did not know which way to turn myſelf.

When the company unmaſked, in compliment to the illuſtrious entertainer, I beheld a vaſt number of ſweet faces among the women, and was crowded by a herd of agreeable men, who ſtrove to vie with each other in beſtowing encomiums on my perſon and dreſs—I grew quite giddy with their praiſes, and endeavoured to make proper replies.

All at once a tall graceful figure, in a blue domino, with a black hat, ornamented with a large diamond in the front, and a white plume of feathers which waved over his fine face, came forward; and on ſeeing me, ſtopped ſhort, with his eyes fixed in ſo particular a manner, that he actually diſconcerted me.—The firſt view

of

of this fine fellow had, indeed, made me unaccountably curious to examine his features with more accuracy; but when I lifted up my eyes, in order to enjoy that ſatisfaction, he was ſtill looking on me with ſo much attention, that I was obliged to throw them down.—I thought I had been too free with my glances, and I felt my face in a monſtrous glow.—Once more, however, urged by curioſity, I ventured to take another peep at him—His eyes were, then, modeſtly caſt down, and he turned away as if he was aſhamed of having almoſt ſtared me out of countenance.

Before I had time to reflect much upon my behaviour, he joined my aunt, and was preſented to me by the title of lord Avon:—But I ſhall never do juſtice to his firſt overtures towards a converſation—His carriage was ſo genteel, and there was ſuch a delightful but reſpectful freedom and eaſe in his manners, that the moments flew away like lightuing, while he ſpoke; and

and I was ſo captivated by his converſation, that I could hear no voice but his; which was, indeed, moſt bewitchingly harmonious.—He was prodigiouſly attentive to all my looks, to my every motion, and ſeeming to read my wiſhes in my eyes, made a conſiderable addition to the pleaſure which I received from the ſcenery around me, by his entertaining communications concerning ſeveral of the principal perſonages in the room.

His behaviour, upon the whole, was in the higheſt degree, inſinuating and prepoſſeſſing, but there were ſome parts of it which puzzled me—he heard numbers aſk me to dance, without making the leaſt offer of his hand to me; and as I had never danced in publick, I choſe to refuſe every body elſe—He left me, too, for ſo long a time, that I thought I ſhould never ſee him again—

To own the truth, Olivia, I could not help regretting his abſence—I felt pretty much as I uſed to feel when you and our dear

dear Alicia have been gone from me for a whole day.—I was reſtleſs; I was uneaſy: I wiſhed anxiouſly for his return.—My roving eyes wandered no longer in ſearch of new amuſement: they were rivetted to the ſpot which he had quitted, and on which I longed—Oh! how I longed!—to ſee him.

The men ſtill chatted to me, and talked of my eyes and my lips, and my teeth and my hair; of the brilliancy of my complexion, and the ſweetneſs of my ſmiles—but I ſcarce attended to them; they had, at firſt, given me a great deal of delight; but their compliments, by being often repeated, with few variations, were rather diſguſting than flattering to my wearied ears.—I began to grow ſerious; not to ſay peeviſh—I was alſo fatigued—I did not know what I would have.

When I had been in this uncomfortable way for ſome time, I ſaw lord Avon preſſing thro' the crowd to meet me, with an eagerneſs which revived all my good-hu-

mour

mour and gaiety in a moment. I laughed, I chatted again with the ſame ſprightlineſs as before; every thing about me had a more ſpirited appearance, and I could have ſtaid all night in ſo charming a place.

While I was enjoying the animated evening with increaſed ſatisfaction, my aunt mentioned going home, and my lord offered to take care of me to my chair.

As his lordſhip was, I perceived, an acquaintance of my aunt's, I gave him my hand without any heſitation.

The chair ſoon ſtopped—He then came up to me again, and handed me into a poſt-chariot; in which I, ſimply believing he had only removed me to prevent my being oppreſſed with the crowd, ſat very quiet, till he almoſt ſtruck me dumb with aſtoniſhment, by declaring a violent paſſion for me—After having told me that he had taken this ſtep to ſecure me to himſelf, as he knew that my uncle deſigned

ſigned me for his ſon; and that he had not been able to think of any other way to prevent an union, the bare idea of which almoſt bereft him of life; he concluded with aſſuring me that I ſhould be treated with the moſt reſpectful tenderneſs, and with hoping that I would not only pardon his preſumption, but pity the ſituation of his heart, and facilitate the completion of his wiſhes.

I was, as I ſaid before, aſtoniſhed—My aſtoniſhment indeed was exceſſive; but I neither felt myſelf afraid nor offended: tho' I told him that I would never encourage any man without my uncle's approbation, and deſired him to carry me back to Sir William's—I could not, however, prevail on him to comply with my requeſt: yet he treated me in ſo gentle a manner, and was ſo obliging and ſo ſubmiſſive, that I believed myſelf to be ſafe under his protection—When it grew light I grew leſs embarraſſed; and had an opportunity to examine his features very cloſely:

cloſely: they are regularly beautiful—There is ſo much fire, and ſo much ſoftneſs in his eyes, alternately, that I, ſometimes, am hardly able to meet his looks; and am forced to turn away mine twenty times in an hour—His hair is neither light nor dark, but prodigiouſly fine—His perſonal beauties are certainly conſiderable; but the winning complacency of his carriage, the amiable traits of mildneſs and benevolence in his very expreſſive countenance, render him ſuperior, infinitely ſuperior to any man I ever yet beheld.

I ſhall write all night—I can't tell you half what I wiſh to ſay—He has been in ſuch an agony ſince I talked of writing to my uncle, and is ſo afraid of my diſcovering the place of my retreat to you, and of being diſcovered by your anſwer, that I actually pity him; and muſt, therefore, intreat you to direct your letter only to A. B. at the Smyrna coffee-houſe, in Pall-

Pall-Mall; from which it will be brought to me.

Tell my Alicia how affectionately I eſteem her; you well know, my Olivia, how very dear you both are,

To your ſincere friend,

EUDOCIA TAMEWORTH.

LETTER

LETTER V.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

MY Eudocia, who engroſſes my attention, and to whom I devote all my time, perpetually ſtudious to make her ſituation agreeable to her, grows, every hour, more lovely.

I have told you that I made Loyd order ſome changes of dreſs for her—They were depoſited in a large commode in her apartment.

As ſoon as ſhe was going to riſe, on the ſecond morning, Loyd produced two night-gowns and two negligées, that ſhe might chuſe one out of them; and told me, afterwards, that ſhe abſolutely ſcreamed at the ſight of them, ſaying that they were all very handſome, and deſired to be dreſſed in a pale pink night-gown, covered with bunches of white tiſſue flowers; the

the cuffs, &c. were trimmed with blond-lace.

In this dreſs ſhe came down to break-faſt, with a ſmall black-laced hankerchief croſſed over her ſnowy boſom, and a blond-laced cap, which juſt covered the top of her charming hair—(She permitted my frizeur to give her hair a faſhionable appearance, but would not ſuffer him to defile it with powder.) She had a ſlight-worked muſlin apron, and ruffles of the ſame; the former of which was ſpread over a white ſatin petticoat; ſo that alto-gether ſhe was a moſt becoming, an en-chanting figure.

With a delicious ſmile ſhe accoſted me, and thanked me for having provided ſuch an elegant little wardrobe for her; telling me alſo that her uncle, when I would let him know where to find me, would ſettle with me for it—"I hope," added ſhe, "that you will now conſent to his being informed where I am."

"When

"When you condeſcend to become mine," replied I, "by the ſtrongeſt ties, I will, that moment, ſend you to Sir William, or wait on him with you—"

"I have already told you, my lord," ſaid ſhe, more than once, "that I cannot conſent to any thing without my uncle's previous approbation."

"I muſt then be miſerable," replied I, folding my arms, and gazing on her, till tears of tenderneſs, excited by the dread of having her taken from me, ruſhed into my eyes; and I was obliged to cover my face with my handkerchief, to hide emotions which might, I feared, leſſen me in her opinion.—Women, in general, do not like a tame, ſubmiſſive, ſighing, whining, poor devil of a lover; the careleſs, degageé, indifferent, charming fellow of fire, is in their eyes a thouſand times more attractive.—But my Eudocia is of a ſofter diſpoſition.

While I ſat ſtifling my emotions, ſhe with her ſnowy fingers gently removed my hand

hand from my eyes—Heavens—what a thrilling tranſport inſtantaneouſly ſhot thro' my trembling frame!—I was going to thank her, by catching her in my arms—but a look, ſerious tho' not ſevere, accompanied with theſe words: "Come, ſhall we go to breakfaſt?" reſtrained my ecſtaſies within proper bounds, and made us the beſt company in the world to each other.—This is doing nothing, however—Her uncle muſt, certainly, find her out; and then, unleſs I can prove her to be my wife, how ſhall I be able, juſtly, to detain her?—Were I to make the moſt ſubmiſſive, the moſt advantageous propoſal, I ſhould as certainly receive a flat refuſal.—What will become of me?—If appearances, indeed, are not very deceitful, ſhe does not hate me; yet, whenever I mention marriage, ſhe declares that ſhe will not hear of it without her uncle's conſent.

How many new charms do I, every day diſcover in her!

Having

Having ſettled ſome accompts with Letacre, I went in ſearch of her. Approaching the muſick-room, I heard the moſt raviſhing harmony.

——————I was all ear,
And took in ſtrains that might create a ſoul
Under the ribs of death—

Entering the room haſtily, I ſaw my angel ſitting at the organ—Her excellencies are innumerable — She is ſenſible, ſhrewd and lively, beyond expreſſion; flies about like a bird, and never ſeems ſo happy as when I am chearful.

I carried her from the muſick-room to the library: ſhe diſcovered no ſmall ſatisfaction at the ſight of ſo many authors ſhe had never met with before; telling me that her grandfather had few books of entertainment, but Milton's and Taſſo's poems, of which ſhe was very fond; and that he had taught her to reliſh the beautiful compoſition of the latter, in the lan-

guage in which it was written.—What an accompliſhed creature!—And yet ſhe has not the leaſt vanity—either on account of her perſonal charms, or of her intellectual attainments—but wanting modeſty

I left her, thinking that ſhe wiſhed to be ſo left, among the books; but not being able to ſtay longer from her, ſoon returned.

I found her in ſo deep a reverie, that ſhe did not even lift up her lovely eyes on my entrance. I ſtole ſoftly behind her, and ſaw her intenſely engaged in the peruſal of Sir Charles Grandiſon.

A ſigh which eſcaped me, ariſing from my reflecting on his well-pictured happineſs in being ſo beloved, rouzed her.

I ſeized that moment to tell her I almoſt envied the author of the work before her, tho' dead, for having made it ſo betwitching—

"For Heavens ſake," cried ſhe, "don't interrupt me; I am prodigiouſly intereſted in theſe people's affairs." not intereſted about the anxiety of I bowed, her family,

I bowed, obeyed, and took up a book alſo, placing myſelf in ſuch a poſition, as to ſee every movement of the paſſions in her expreſſive features.

At laſt her boſom heaved, and ſhe burſt into tears—Then, lifting up her eyes, on a ſudden, "My God!" ſaid ſhe, from what dangers have I hitherto been preſerved!—"Let me—Let me go to my uncle's," added ſhe, with hurrying accents—"I am terrified to death."—

"My dear angel," replied I, running to her, "what has alarmed you?—You ſhall go to your uncle when you pleaſe: let me only be authorized to go with you: let me but call you lady Avon, and I will wait on you directly."

"Ay, that's the very thing," ſaid ſhe, with a plaintive voice, "You would force me to marry, you act like Sir Hargrave—But had I ever ſeen this ſtory, my lord, I ſhould not have come ſo quietly with you—I never dreamt of ſuch proceedings."

"My deareſt creature," anſwered I, ſitting down by her, and taking her hand in mine, "do not diſtruſt me: I ſwear by every thing, ſolemn and ſacred, that I will never even deſire you to act, in any ſhape whatever, againſt your inclination—I only wiſh to prevail on you to think favourably of me—Were I but fortunate enough to pleaſe you, to make you repoſe confidence in me, you would not wiſh to leave me, to leave me for ever wretched."—"But I ſee," continued I, riſing, and walking from her, looking the diſcontent, which I really felt, for ſhe had twined herſelf about my ſoul, "I ſee that I muſt never hope to gain your affections—Some happier man is deſtined to obtain that moſt enviable felicity."

Throwing myſelf into a chair, at a diſtance from her, I ſat without ſpeaking, near an hour, endeavouring to ſtifle my uneaſineſs; my frequent ſighs, however, ſufficiently diſcovered the extremity of my diſquietude.

Eudocia

Eudocia continued reading, and paid too much attention to her book, as I thought at leaſt: but I happened to be very much miſtaken—

Laying down her book, and walking ſlowly towards me, ſhe ſaid, with a ſmile, "'Tis a fine morning, my lord, what do you think of a ſaunter in the garden?" Fool, fool, fool—

I roſe immediately, to accompany her thither: but apprehending, while we were walking towards it, that ſhe might poſſibly, in conſequence of having imbibed ſome new ideas from the volume ſhe had been reading, want to go into the garden, in order to find a way to make her eſcape from me; I was ſerious and penſive.

Having bounded over the graſs for ſome time, with the moſt graceful celerity, blythe as a bird, and nimble as a fawn; ſhe, all at once, flew from me, like lightning. I then, indeed, was cer-

tain that ſhe had intended to run into the fields, by which my friend's garden is bounded.

I purſued her.

She turned ſuddenly about, and met me.

Tranſported to find myſelf again miſtaken, I caught her in my arms; but ſhe, inſtantly breaking from me, told me, laughing, that ſhe could outrun me at any time: challenging me, almoſt at the ſame breath, to a race.

You may be aſſured that I took up the gauntlet.

Juſt when I was coming up, near to my Ataläntä, ſhe, ſeeing me at her elbow, ſcreamed, but with a playful ſprightlineſs, and ſtumbled, by redoubling her pace, over ſomething which ſhe had not perceived— She ſtumbled, and ſhe fell.

You cannot imagine how terrified I was, leſt ſhe ſhould have been hurt by her fall— I raiſed her immediately from the ground—

She

She attempted to move again, with her uſual agility; but to no purpoſe—She complained of her foot, and would have fallen a ſecond time, if I had not held her in my arms. I was diſtracted to think of her ſuffering a moment's uneaſineſs, and delivered myſelf, in terms which ſufficiently proved the ſincerity of my concern on her account.

"My foot is better," ſaid ſhe, "and I will try to walk to the houſe."

While ſhe uttered theſe words, ſhe ſeemed to be very much affected with my behaviour to her.

I intreated her to let me carry her to the houſe—She bluſhingly refuſed, at firſt, but neceſſity compelled her to yield to my importunities: tho' it was with no ſmall difficulty that I prevailed on her to throw her ivory arms round my neck, to ſupport herſelf the more ſecurely. The raptures, however, which I felt on being in ſo delicious a ſituation, almoſt endan-

gered us both; for I trembled to ſuch a degree, that I could but juſt guide my ſteps with any kind of ſteadineſs.

At laſt, I ſeated her on a ſopha in the parlour, and retired, while Loyd examined her foot.

When I returned, ſhe told me that ſhe believed it was a little ſprained.

I would have ſent, immediately, for a ſurgeon, tho' I ſhould by ſo doing have riſqued a diſcovery of the place in which I had ſecreted her; but ſhe ſtrenuouſly oppoſed me, ſaying that Mrs. Loyd, no doubt, was acquainted with many common remedies proper upon ſuch occaſions, and that ſhe would be in nobody's hands but hers.

How conſiderate! how charming was her behaviour! and how my heart longed to thank her for it!—I did thank her for it, the moment we were by ourſelves, in terms which at once diſcovered my gratitude and my love.

With

With the utmoſt good-humour ſhe replied, "I am glad I have pleaſed you."

"Pleaſe me, my life," ſaid I; "you have always pleaſed me—charmed me—tranſported me out of my ſenſes"—

"Yes, but you was half angry, juſt before we went into the garden; and I only propoſed going thither to divert you."

"Angry, my angel?" cried I, "no—you wrong me—I could not have been angry with you—I was only grieved at your wanting to leave me."

"I ſhould not want to leave you," ſaid ſhe, "if my uncle did but conſent to my being here; and I believe you yourſelf cannot think that you have taken a right ſtep."

"You would then be mine," replied I, half afraid, half dreading her anſwer, "if your uncle conſented?"

"I don't know what to ſay, my lord; I would act with diſcretion: and yet—

"Oh ſay what means that pauſe, that yet? Is it in my favour, or do you doom me to miſery?"

"I can't talk about it now."

She looked, tho' confuſed, kinder on me, I thought, than ſhe had ever done.—I redoubled my attention to amuſe her; and was more than ever ſolicitous to make her ſituation eaſy, as ſhe was obliged to be confined to her apartment. I read to her, I played on my mandoline—She never failed to make me a great many compliments, on my vocal and inſtrumental performances; deſiring me not only to teach her my ſongs, but my manner in ſinging them. What a delightful employment! and how tranſported was I to hear her ſweet voice, reſponſive to my leſs harmonious one! She alſo learns to play upon the mandoline; and I have the happineſs of placing her delicate fingers upon the ſtrings.—She muſt be mine—If I loſe her now, I ſhall run diſtracted—But

I muſt

I muſt lay down my pen—My whole time is devoted to my Eudocia—I have only leiſure to write when I retire to my chamber—Eudocia is my life, my ſoul, my every thing—and I am as much with her as ſhe will permit me to be.—

Richardſon has alarmed her.—She has bolted her door every night, ſince I found her with a volume of his laſt maſterly work in her hands.

LETTER VI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

MY Eudocia is ſtill confined, but her foot grows better, and I have hopes—hopes my friend—She ſeems to be touched with my tenderneſs and concern for her, and by appearing ſo, increaſes my anxiety about her: yet ſhe never was more chearful: ſhe endeavours, with much aſſiduity to enliven me, but to little purpoſe.—I am, indeed, upon the rack—Every noiſe makes me ſtart, and every perſon who rings at the gate, is ſuſpected by me of coming to ſnatch her from my fond arms.

Your anſwers have been, hitherto, ſhort, vague, and unſatisfactory—Tell me—but how ſhould you, who have never ſeen her, who are unacquainted with her humour and her taſte; how ſhould you know bet-

ter

better than myſelf—what will win her heart.—

We have been engaged in ſeveral long and intereſting converſations. She has given me a very lively and pictureſque deſcription of the manner in which ſhe was educated, of the ſtyle in which ſhe lived, and of her companions alſo; who are, by her account, nearly as amiable as herſelf; two young girls, the daughters of a neighbouring country gentleman. She ſpeaks of their friendſhip in the higheſt terms, wonders they do not write to her, and calls them her dear Alicia and her dear Olivia—How I envy them! eſpecially the latter, who has, I find, the greater ſhare of her eſteem.

I told her yeſterday, that I wiſhed I was her beloved Olivia.

She, immediately, threw down her charming eyes, and ſaid, "You would not get much by the gratification of that wiſh."

A gentle

A gentle ſigh followed thoſe words. What could I think of that ſigh?—I felt myſelf uncommonly agitated, and inſtantly aſked her what ſhe meant by ſuch enigmatical expreſſions, and why ſhe ſighed.

She made an evaſive anſwer. I was not willing to teaze her; and therefore, turned the converſation. There is certainly an alteration in her carriage: and yet ſhe ſeems pleaſed to have me always near her. She talks to me with more freedom: ſhe deſires me to do twenty little things for her: ſhe never ſtirs without my aſſiſtance. I carry her every evening to the door of her apartment: when I take my leave of her, ſhe thanks me for my care, and wiſhes me a good night; with accents ſo full of tenderneſs, that they almoſt madden me with joy.—I have not yet, however, been able to bring her to the point ſo long, ſo earneſtly——She calls me: I will fly to her on the wings of love.

In

IN CONTINUATION.

I AM, at laſt, as happy as I can, with reaſon, expect to be, in ſo ſhort a time—But what has reaſon to do with love?

Yeſterday, while I was ſitting by her, and looking on her with unutterable delight, but not liſtening to the obſervations, which ſhe threw out on a variety of ſubjects—(Obſervations which I ſhould have liſtened to with rapture, had my mind been perfectly at eaſe) with the attention they deſerved; ſhe ſaid, "What ails you, my lord? You are ſtill melancholy, tho' I do my beſt to divert you."

"I cannot be chearful," replied I, while I remain in this ſuſpence. "If you loved as ardently as I do, without being encouraged to expect a return to your love, would you not be in an unquiet, would you not be in an unhappy ſtate, as I am?

"Really

"I really think, my lord, that, of the two, I have moſt reaſon to be unquiet and unhappy, taken from my friends and confined here, without having the liberty of ſeeing them, or writing to them; and yet I have hitherto, ſubmitted to my impriſonment, without diſcovering ſo much uneaſineſs as I, poſſibly, ought to have done upon ſuch an occaſion."

As ſhe ſpoke theſe words with an angry tone, yet looked, at the ſame time, as if ſhe was ſorry for having ſo uttered them—I felt myſelf ſtrangely moved—I felt moſt ſeverely the juſtneſs of her reproof;—it pained my heart extremely. I could not bear to ſee her repine at a ſituation, which I had hoped, from her behaviour in it, was not totally diſagreeable to her. From ſome expreſſions, however, in her ſpeech, I flattered myſelf with hopes, but was afraid to indulge them.

I only ſighed a reply.

"Since then we are not ſatisfied with each other," ſaid ſhe, "it would be certainly

tainly better for us to ſeparate — Suffer me, therefore, to go home to my uncle, directly."

"You are abſolutely reſolved, then, to make me ſupremely wretched? Sir William, you know, deſigns to have you married to his ſon: you know too that when I have reſigned you to him, I muſt never expect to ſee you again; for you may be aſſured, from my increaſing paſſion for you, that death will be more welcome to me, than the ſight of you in another's arms; and that I ſhall not be able to ſurvive the loſs of you.—But you ſhall be miſtreſs of your own actions, madam: I will not detain you ſo exceedingly againſt your inclination: if, after all my reſpectful tenderneſs: if, after all my aſſiduities to ſoften your heart in my favour, you give me no reaſon to hope for your eſteem, I give you up—I ſtill doat on you, ſtill adore you—but I give you up—You ſhall be happy, if I can, poſſibly, make you ſo; whatever wretchedneſs I feel

feel by endeavouring to promote your felicity."

I ſtopped here—my voice faultered ſo much, that my words were hardly articulated.

She ſat with her eyes fixed on the carpet, ſeemingly in a great agitation.

At that juncture your letter was brought to me, which informed me of your imagining that Sir William had diſcovered the place to which I carried his niece, and would ſoon find means to get her back again. How much am I indebted to you for this intelligence, tho' it made me almoſt mad at the ſame time!

Eudocia ſoon perceived the extreme perturbation of my mind, upon the receipt of ſo intereſting a letter; but I did not give her time to aſk the cauſe of it.

"There, madam," ſaid I, now you will have your wiſh: "your uncle is coming to tear you from me; and you will for ever get rid of a man, who is become ſo odious to you."

She

She lifted up her ſweet aſtoniſhed eyes, and looked, I thought, diſtreſſed.

I flew to her, I could not bear to ſee her a ſingle moment unhappy; and taking her no longer reluctant hand, ſaid, "Tell me, my lovely, my beloved Eudocia, what gives you uneaſineſs now, as I am going to reſign you to your uncle, and to the happy man who will, I hope, be able to pleaſe you; tho' it has not been in my power to give you pleaſure. — However, Miſs Tameworth," continued I, "as I have not abuſed the advantages which your ſituation here afforded me, I ſhall not, I flatter myſelf, be remembered with deteſtation—Since you cannot behold me with the eyes of love, let me at leaſt be thought intitled to your compaſſion."

With a ſigh, which ſhook her whole frame, ſhe dropped a tear upon the charming hand, which I ſtill held, and ſaid, "Who told you that you was not loved, and that I wiſhed to forget you?"

A ſhower

A ſhower of tears prevented farther utterance. I threw my arms round her; her head ſunk upon my ſhoulder, while I, tranſported almoſt out of my ſenſes, kiſſed away the pearly drops, rolling down her glowing cheek; and ſoftly aſked her if I might draw animating hopes from her tears and from her emotions: if ſhe would indeed be mine.

"Hold," replied ſhe, riſing, with uncommon ſpirit, "As you have not hitherto given me reaſon to complain of your behaviour, don't begin to make it cenſurable—It is in conſideration of the diſcretion which has diſtinguiſhed your carriage to me, that I am reſolved to be yours."

"My angel, my life, my all," replied I, "we muſt then remove from hence with all poſſible expedition."—

"And why not ſtay and ſee my uncle, and perſuade him to conſent"—

"Oh! no—he never will give his conſent—It cannot be expected—We muſt ſet out,

out, immediately, for France. On our arrival there, I will, becauſe I would omit nothing that can be done to pleaſe you, write to him, and aſk his permiſſion to call him uncle: but till we are out of his power, I dare not venture to have an interview with him."

She made no reply.

As ſhe had conſtantly and ſtrenuouſly oppoſed all my ſollicitations for a marriage, I was quite unprepared for the ſudden performance of the ceremony, in a proper manner: I, therefore, ordered my travelling equipage to be got ready, and we in a ſhort time afterwards ſet out poſt for Dover.

She bore her journey beyond my expectation—She is rather ſerious, and often ſeems to be deeply thinking; but ſhe has, hitherto, made no oppoſition to any thing, except an increaſe of tenderneſs on my part; tho' I ſwear I love her, and revere her too much to take any unbecoming liberties.

My dear, my amiable Eudocia, desired so earnestly to have Loyd with her, that I consented to her going in the chariot with us.

Let me know all that passes relating to our flight, and direct for me at the post-house at Calais.

We are waiting for a wind—

I don't find yet that we are pursued; but wish heartily to be on the other side of the water.

The wind is fair— Adieu.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

Miſs TAMEWORTH to Miſs OLIVIA HERBERT.

WHERE are you, my dear friend? and why do I hear nothing from you? Theſe queſtions, indeed, you may, perhaps, be ready to retort upon me.—But I actually wrote to you, my deareſt girl, and told you all that had happened to me—I am very much afraid that my letter miſcarried—If you have received it, you are, probably, diſpleaſed with my behaviour; you think that I have been too condeſcending to lord Avon, and are conſidering in what terms to chide me.—But hold, Olly: ſtay a little—ſee him; hear him, before you condemn your friend—I am young and unexperienced, I well know; and ſomething tells me that I have been wrong in not oppoſing more violently my lord's proceedings.—Yet I

am

am ſure he loves me; and while he treats me with ſo much reſpect, while he is perpetually ſtriving to oblige me, can I drive him to deſpair, by conſenting to marry my couſin?

"Why then, if you love my lord, do you not accept of his hand directly?"

I'll tell you, my dear Olivia—I am well aſſured that my uncle, on my acting in that manner, would endeavour to take meaſures to deprive me of my fortune; and I cannot bear to think of my lord's loſing what he would have a right to, or of being involved in diſputes and law-ſuits on my account. No—I will let him ſee that I am not leſs generous than himſelf.

We are on our way to Paris, from whence he has promiſed to write to my uncle; and if my uncle ſhould perſiſt in refuſing his conſent, I will never marry at all: not, at leaſt, while lord Avon is unhappy about me.—I am not ſure whether I love him as well as he does me, but I

am

am very ſure that I ſhall never like any other man ſo well.

Write to me, my dear Olivia—If you are not able to write—how I am terrified leſt you ſhould be indiſpoſed!—Why is my Alicia ſilent? Lord Avon's ſervant called every day at the coffee-houſe, but found no letter agreeable to the addreſs which I ſent to you—I now ſend another before we leave England; and beg, if you ever loved your Eudocia, to diſpatch an anſwer to her immediately.

he is a man of a thouſand.—As for myſelf, I am between both—neither ſo ſolemn as your lordſhip, nor ſo wild as Charles—Now, if you think I have not too low an opinion of myſelf, let me know how you and your Eudocia go on—Pardon me for having been ſo ſhort in my replies before—I was really prevented from ſending you above four lines at a time, by urgent buſineſs, which could not be neglected, or indeed, delayed.

If you are nooſed when this reaches your hand, pray make my compliments of congratulation acceptable to your angel.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

HOW terrified have I been, on my poor Eudocia's account! Soon after our embarkation ſuch a ſtorm aroſe, that it made even thoſe who navigated our little veſſel, apprehenſive of danger; but their apprehenſions were trifling, compared to mine, concerning my dear, dear girl; who, never having been at ſea before, was extremely alarmed—Yet I really believe that I was ſtill more alarmed—I had taken her from her family, with whom ſhe lived in ſecurity, and expected every moment to ſee her buried in the ocean—What dreadful reflections ſprung up in my tortured mind!—I was almoſt unnerved by them—I caught her in my arms, and endeavoured to comfort her, tho' I ſtood much more in need of conſolation myſelf, while ſhe laid

her languid head on my boſom; as if ſhe thought herſelf ſafer ſo reclined, bade me have patience, and called on me to join with her in ſupplicating heaven to ſnatch us from the jaws of death.—Our petitions were heard—The ſcene grew leſs horrid; the waves were leſs agitated, and I was ſupremely happy in beholding my ſoul's richeſt treaſure on ſhore, perfectly recovered from her fright, and in high ſpirits. She was not once ſick during the paſſage, which was not indeed a long, tho' a very tempeſtuous one.

We ſhall not, I fancy, return in haſte, unleſs there ſhould be a neceſſity for appearing in England—This letter is accompanied with a formal, but reſpectful addreſs to Sir William Tameworth, to demand his lovely niece in marriage—It is filled with apologies, for the offences which I have committed, in conſequence of the ardor of my paſſion; and my Eudocia has done me the honour to approve of what I have ſaid—

I ſhall

I ſhall expect, with the greateſt impatience, the baronet's reply, which will be forwarded to me, according to my orders, at Paris—To that metropolis I ſhall ſet out in an hour's time, not without hopes of receiving a letter from you in a ſhort time, directed to me in it.

LETTER X.

Miſs TAMEWORTH to Miſs OLIVIA HEBER.

THO' I am ſtill in the greateſt ſurprize about you, my dear, I now impute my not hearing from you, to the irregularity of my own movements: I, therefore, ſhall ſtill continue to inform you of them, not doubting but that your ſurprize, on reading about them, will be equal to mine—For my part, I am aſtoniſhed beyond expreſſion at what has paſſed, and alſo beyond expreſſion, concerned.

Poor lord Avon, my dear Olivia, the moſt agreeable, the moſt amiable of men, lies dead, at this moment, I am afraid, and I am the unhappy cauſe of his death.

Do you not wonder at my calmneſs, after ſo dreadful an event?—I actually wonder at it myſelf: but I believe that my anger and reſentment have got the better

better of my grief. When I conſider how inſolently I have been treated, by thoſe who were not in the leaſt authorized to take ſuch liberties, I feel myſelf too much provoked to be moved by the ſofter paſſions.—But to give you a detail of this ſhocking affair, with as much exactneſs as I can—

I wrote to you while we were waiting for a wind at Dover. Soon afterwards the wind proved favourable, and we embarked: but in a little time after our embarkation, a violent ſtorm aroſe, which alarmed me exceedingly, as I had never been at ſea before; my terrors, however, great as they were, fell far ſhort of lord Avon's apprehenſions concerning me—He ſeemed to be attentive to nothing, to be ſollicitous about nothing but my health and ſafety: and his apprehenſions operated ſo powerfully upon him, that he would ſcarce ſuffer me to go from his arms—I felt myſelf, indeed, I will freely own, my dear

Olivia, happier and more ſecure in them, than any where elſe.

We arrived ſafe at Calais, however; but my lord would not proceed from thence till I was quite recovered from my fatigue—His laſt tender precaution occaſioned, I fear, the unfortunate event which I now ſo ſincerely deplore—

He wrote, immediately on our landing at Calais, a letter to my uncle, to aſk his conſent to our marriage. Unluckily my uncle and Mr. Tameworth left England in purſuit of us, before that letter came to hand.

Lord Avon having, in conſequence of thinking himſelf more ſure of me than ever, left me for a few moments with Mrs. Loyd; I, like a giddy ſimpleton, leaned out of the window for a little amuſement, to ſtare at the variety of new figures which were paſſing in the ſtreet before me—

On a ſudden I heard a voice well known to me—"There ſhe is, now we are ſure of her."

Turning

Turning my head inſtantly, I ſaw my uncle.—Imagine my ſurprize and terror; for, by what he ſaid, I naturally ſuppoſed that he was come to fetch me away: and I was right—He was in my room in a moment—Inſtead of diſcovering any diſpleaſure at the ſight of me, he ſaid he was very happy in meeting with me; and added, that he had brought his ſon with him, to conduct me to England.

I ſtarted and drew back, ſhocked at the thoughts of leaving my lord, deſiring him to ſtay and ſpeak to lord Avon, as he had juſt written to him.

"We cannot poſſibly ſtay," replied he, looking at his ſon, "My lord may follow us."

He then pulled me, very loth to attend him, towards the door. I hung back, and refuſed to go with him till I had ſeen my lord.

My uncle, finding me ſo refractory, painted in the ſtrongeſt colours the indelicacy of remaining with a man ſo long as

I had done; declared that my character was abſolutely loſt; and that I could have no chance to appear in the world again in a reputable light, but by putting myſelf under his protection—"I am your neareſt relation, concluded he, and never could have thought that you would have ſhewn ſo much unwillingneſs to accompany me."

I aſſured him that I was not unwilling to accompany him, for whom I had a great regard, provided he would not oblige me to marry againſt my inclination—"Lord Avon, ſaid I, from the moment he carried me from the Opera-Houſe, has treated me with the higheſt reſpect: he would have married me immediately, but I refuſed to be united to him till I received your conſent.—My lord wrote a letter to you, on my repeated refuſal to him, in order to obtain that conſent, which is now, perhaps, on its paſſage to England; and as no reaſonable objections can, I believe, be made to his lordſhip's propoſals,

poſals, I wiſh you would ſtay and hear them from his own mouth."

"I ſhall ſtay for nobody," ſaid my uncle, fiercely—"You muſt, therefore, reſolve to go with me directly."

What could I do? My uncle was poſitive, was peremptory: I could not expoſe myſelf by reſiſting my neareſt remaining relation—Reſiſtance would have been to no purpoſe, for there was not a creature to lend me the leaſt aſſiſtance but Loyd—I deſired her, earneſtly however, to tell my lord, that I went with my uncle, and that I ſhould not forget my promiſe to him.

Loyd looked both frightened and afflicted; and my uncle conducted me on board a veſſel, which was juſt ready to ſail.

I ſpoke not a ſingle word. I was totally paſſive, but I determined to keep both my hand and my heart for lord Avon.

While I was ſo determining, my uncle was talking to the maſter of the veſſel—

Preſently

Preſently Mr. Tameworth came on board, in a violent agitation, and told his father, in a low voice, that in following us, he had been purſued by lord Avon—"He demanded Miſs Tameworth of me, ſword in hand;" and upon my replying, "you ſhall never ſee her again," ſaid, "it is enough, Sir, then I ſhall endeavour to prevent you from enjoying the happineſs you have ſo peremptorily refuſed me," calling upon me to defend myſelf. I obeyed him, immediately, and ran him thro' the body; he fell, and I have been lucky enough to eſcape, and will accompany you to England; from whence I ſhall ſet ſail, as ſoon as poſſible, for Rotterdam, if my lord ſhould actually be killed."

I fainted away, and was only recovered to feel my unhappineſs the more ſeverely.

When I opened my eyes, I found my uncle ſollicitous, Mr. Tameworth particularly ſo, about my recovery—But how different were their attentions from thoſe I had ſo lately received from my lord!—

I puſhed

I puſhed them from me, as objects which filled me with horror; and now wiſhed for that tempeſt which I beheld, in ſuch an alarmed ſtate, to bury me in the waves.

Tears and ſighs were all the replies I could make to Mr. Tameworth's aſſiduities—I even put my hand before my eyes, that I might not look on him who had deprived the moſt amiable man in the world of his life.

My uncle attempted to comfort me—"Had you but waited," ſaid I, "a moment, according to my requeſt, to ſee my lord, this dreadful affair would not have happened."

In this way we continued, till we arrived in Hill-Street.

My lady received me with a torrent of ſharp exclamations, againſt my weakneſs and indiſcretion.

I only anſwered them with my tears.—I deſired to go to my apartment, and to ſee nobody, ſince I had for ever loſt the amiable

amiable man who was ſo deſervedly dear to me.

My uncle ſhook his head at me—My aunt called me a ridiculous girl, adding, with paſſionate accents, that I ſhould be the death of her poor dear George alſo.

George very officiouſly offered to follow me; and intreated me, with much importunity, not to be diſpleaſed at the warmth of my lady's temper—I flapped the door againſt him; and throwing myſelf into a chair, gave a vent to my ſorrow: to a ſorrow more piercing than I had ever yet endured; and as it admits of no relief, it will, I hope, ſoon put an end to my miſerable exiſtence.

I wiſh, my dear Olivia, that they would ſend me back to the ſweet retreat, in which I ſpent ſo many happy days with my beloved companions; or that they would ſuffer me to invite you and my Alicia to be with me here — But I have no power to do any thing: I have

no

no will in this houſe. Yet, not all the force on earth ſhall ever oblige me to marry George Tameworth.

Write to me now, my truly loved friend, if you have not written already; for you will, I believe, own that I ſtand in need of all your conſolation.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

I HEAR from you, at laſt, my dear Olivia; I hear from you and my ſweet Alicia, both at the ſame time—What pleaſure has not your kind remembrance afforded me!

I alſo learn from Mr. Mountney, who has brought me a letter from lord Avon, that he is, unexpectedly, recovered, and hopes to be with me as ſoon as the ſurgeons will give him leave to travel—Were I to deſcribe the joy I feel upon this occaſion, you would ſuppoſe that my head was a little turned; and were I to copy my lord's letter, you would think that he was ſtill leſs in his ſenſes. It was accompanied with one to my uncle, in which he has offered (as Mr. Mountney tells me) to give up half my fortune, provided he may have

have leave to addreſs me; and his friend adds, that my uncle, after having demurred, ſaid he would anſwer my lord's letter, and deſire the favour of his company when he came to England.

This Mr. Mountney is a pretty gentleman, appears to be a ſincere friend of my lord's, and would adore my ſweet Olivia, were ſhe but here—He ſeems to have all his ſober ſenſes about him, and is neither one minute elevated above the clouds, nor the next, ſunk into the abyſs of deſpair: but he is not a lover like lord Avon or Mr. Tameworth. As the former is now recovered, I can bear to name them together; tho' the latter is ſo very inferior a character, that there can be no compariſon between them.

I am in prodigious ſpirits: this agreeable news, added to your friendly letter, has made me wild with joy.

I am to go to the play to-morrow—I have not ſtirred out of my apartment ſince I came here, till to-day—I have ſeen no-

thing

thing yet.—I expect a vaſt deal of pleaſure, by ſeeing every thing, and going every where.

I have not thoroughly enjoyed myſelf ſince that charming maſquerade night. I wiſh I could give you a tolerable idea of it; but I will hope that I may have an opportunity to ſhew you both, my dear friends, every thing that's worth ſeeing in town.

You rally me about Edmund, but—whether your conjectures are right or not—he is nobody—to me.—He comes too late.

LETTER

LETTER XII.

Mr. MOUNTNEY to Lord AVON.

I CARRIED your letters, agreeably to your deſires; and if it is diſcreet to fall in love with a woman, meerly for her perſon, love on.—I never yet ſaw a woman ſo captivating as your Eudocia. Don't fly out now, and imagine me capable of inſinuating that her charms are meerly perſonal—She has many attractions beſides thoſe which ſtrike at firſt ſight—She has ſeveral accompliſhments to engage the attention; ſhe has a good underſtanding, much pleaſing vivacity, and ſome ſenſibility.

She received your letter, with more gaiety than I expected, from a woman in love.—But women are unaccountable beings—She knew, indeed, by George's ſtaying in England, as well as from publick

lick report, that you were out of danger, before.

I mentioned your diſintereſted affection for her.

She replied, while a moſt bewitching ſmile lighted up her face, that ſhe feared you over-rated her.

If ſhe loves you as well as you love her, my lord, you will be certainly as happy as the tendereſt paſſion can make you: I mean, if Sir William accepts your offer; and I fancy he will ſwallow the bait.—But then, if George ſhould be as ſtrongly enamoured as yourſelf, and will not give her up, what muſt be done? No more duelling, I hope—There is no woman, begging Miſs Tameworth's pardon, worth fighting for—Hold—Have I not already ſaid enough to expect your lordſhip's ſword thro' my body.—You may ſpare me, however—There will be tilting enough if you quarrel with every man who admires Eudocia.

Sedley

Sedley has been obliged to take a trip to Ireland—Had he been here he would have, I believe, got a ſight of her by this time—He is the devil of a fellow, you know, with the women—A word to the wiſe—Come, therefore, with all poſſible haſte, and make her firmly yours—

I am preparing to ſet off for Cheſter, to wait the arrival of my uncle—Ackworth goes as Sedley comes: perhaps they may meet.

LETTER

LETTER XIII.

Lord Avon to Mr. Mountney.

I Have been introduced to my lovely Eudocia, in form.—With what tender awe did I approach my angel! and with what ſweet vivacity did ſhe welcome me to England, in the preſence of Lady Tameworth and Sir William, who have, at length, on my repeated ſollicitations, agreed to my propoſal!

How elegantly was the charming girl adorned to receive me! She looked a Venus.—Never had ſhe appeared ſo beautiful to me. Pleaſure danced in her lovely eyes, on my being preſented to her by her uncle; and the conſciouſneſs of not being able to conceal her joyous emotions, threw a bluſh over her fair face, which made her perfectly enchanting.—I was loſt in tranſport, and, for

for ſome time, could ſcarce keep it within proper bounds.

Sir William and my lady either gueſſing at my wiſhes, or thinking it polite to leave us, made decent apologies, and quitted the room, one after the other.

With what rapture did I then begin to unfold every ſecret of my heart! How did I lament the pains of abſence, and the tortures of uncertainty!—How did I exult at having, at laſt, gained the happy moment, to ſollicit the favour of her hand, with the concurrence of thoſe who had the care of her; and at being encouraged to hope that ſhe would not now refuſe to bleſs me with it!

"I don't know," ſaid ſhe, with a lively air, "whether I ought not to diſcourage you for a treatment, which is, I find, from having converſed with people of the world, entirely unprecedented; and which, if not puniſhed, ſhould, certainly, never be rewarded."

"When you reflect upon the dreadful alternative to which I was reduced," ſaid I, taking her hand and kiſſing it, "either to carry you away or to loſe you for ever; you will not, I am well aſſured, you cannot blame proceedings, which, admitting them to be extravagant, were the ſtrongeſt proofs of a violent and irreſiſtible paſſion, bearing down all before it with its impetuoſity; and when you conſider, that notwithſtanding the uncommon ardor of my paſſion, and the flattering opportunities in my power, I never offered to indulge it, nor behaved in a manner the leaſt preſuming or diſreſpectful; you will, I hope, madam, be more inclined to allow me all reaſonable freedoms."

"You are in too great a hurry, my lord," ſaid ſhe, withdrawing her hand, with a look at once expreſſive of dignity and complacency, "you have gained my uncle's approbation, and have received no refuſal from me; but you ought to leave every thing elſe to time and my diſcretion.

I have

I have acquired a good deal of knowledge ſince you took me from my uncle—I had, at that time, been only two days arrived from a diſtant part of England; where, from my infancy, I had chiefly converſed with my father and grandfather, who both lived retired; and a country gentleman, a neighbour, who mixed as little with ſociety as themſelves.—Theſe relations, this neighbour, and two young girls, as innocent and ignorant as myſelf, were my principal companions. I had no mother to inform me how a young woman ought to conduct herſelf, when ſhe came to be taken notice of by men; I had no books to acquaint me with the manners of genteel life; and being thrown immediately, upon my arrival in town, into a ſituation ſo new and ſo embarraſſing, it is not to be wondered at that I behaved both aukwardly and indiſcreetly in it."

This very ſenſible and rational ſpeech, was delivered with a moſt bewitching voice—I could have liſtened ro her me-

lodious accents for ever, with an unwearied attention, had not the buſineſs of the moment urged me to interrupt her, by aſking if ſhe thought ſo charming an apology, for a behaviour which was perfectly prudent, and in every reſpect enchanting, neceſſary. "Would you, my Eudocia," continued I, "wiſh to loſe that amiable, that delightful ſimplicity of manners, which add ſo much lovelineſs to your carriage, and which render you ſo ſuperior to other women, who affect to charm by art, and are afraid to truſt to the attractions of nature. No, my angel, that noble frankneſs, that innate modeſty, and that winning condeſcenſion, with which you honoured me while you was under my protection, render you compleatly attractive: you want no other charms, you want only a little more conſideration for a man who truly loves, who tenderly adores you."

She ſmiled, and her ſmile was an approving one; but ſhe made a ſtrong and ſerious

ſerious reſiſtance when I attempted to kiſs her bluſhing cheek.

To confeſs the truth, Mountney, I was diſconcerted at this repulſe, as ſhe had lived with me, as ſhe had permitted all decent liberties before ſhe had agreed to be my wife; as I had done every thing to obtain her heart, and had all the reaſon in the world to believe that her heart throbbed in my favour.—I was hurt, but I could not be angry—I was half tempted to ſhew ſome reſentment, but her looks diſarmed me—I could not chide ſo ſweet an offender; I therefore ſtrove to conceal my diſquietude.

Finding that I deſiſted from making any efforts to diſpleaſe her, ſhe very readily ſuffered me to ſpeak of our approaching marriage with the raptures which it naturally excited. I even ventured to intreat her not to make any unneceſſary delays.

She made no reply to my laſt words, but began to talk of her Derbyſhire

friends; and to tell me how delighted ſhe would be at the ſight of one or both of them, while I ſat earneſtly wiſhing her to complete my happineſs.

I aſſured her, with the utmoſt ſincerity, that every thing which could afford her the leaſt ſatisfaction, would give me the higheſt pleaſure; and aſked her why ſhe did not invite the Miſs Hebers to come to town, as they would be then ready to accompany us to Richmond after our marriage; adding, that I imagined ſhe would rather chuſe to go to my houſe there, than to remove farther from the capital ſo early in the ſeaſon.

She ſeemed pleaſed with this propoſal, and told me that ſhe would aſk lady Tameworth's leave to invite Olivia, at leaſt.—"I will then write to her directly."

I tore myſelf away from her ſoon afterwards, with no ſmall reluctance; but was tranſported, at the ſame time, to think that I had ſtarted a ſcheme which might make her the more willing to fix upon an early

early day—My lady, who, if I am not miſtaken, has no deſire to ſee handſome girls about her, may, poſſibly, avail herſelf of her compliance with her niece's requeſt, to quicken the departure both of her and her friend, from her houſe to mine; and by doing ſo, will make me bleſt with my Eudocia ſooner than I could otherwiſe hope to be. I wiſh, however, that my dear angel would diſcover a little more tenderneſs for me.—After all that has paſſed, have I not reaſon to expect it?—have I not had reaſon to be diſappointed?

Tameworth is gone into the North, in order to be out of the way, I ſuppoſe—The man who loves Eudocia, and can bear to ſee her in the arms of another, muſt be a wretch indeed.

LETTER XIV.

Miſs TAMEWORTH to Miſs HEBER.

THIS flies to you, my dear Alicia—to you both, my dear friends, from your Eudocia, from her lord Avon; we wiſh, with equal earneſtneſs and ſincerity, to ſee you in town. Lady Tameworth, by me, invites you; and my lord is quite intereſted in your arrival, as I have proteſted that I cannot think of being married but in your preſence. — Conſider, therefore, my ſweet girls, what ſo violent a lover as he declares himſelf to be, muſt endure from your delay! and let that conſideration haſten your departure—I actually bluſh while I write—do I not diſcover a prodigious partiality for lord Avon?—And yet he is perpetually complaining of my want of tenderneſs—He would, indeed, have me be juſt as extravagant

vagant as himſelf: he would not have me think of any body, ſpeak to any body, or breathe for any body, but him.—Now I declare it is downright ſlavery to love at this rate.—My lord is certainly, in my prejudiced eyes, the moſt charming man in the world; but tho' I love him, and him alone, I can laugh, chat, and trifle with every other agreeable fellow who comes in my way.—

He's here—What would he ſay were he to ſee this?—I muſt ſeal it directly.—My beſt reſpects to your good father—He will, I hope, chearfully conſent to ſend one or both of you, immediately, to

Your EUDOCIA.

P. S. Let me know when you ſet out—My lord and I will come and meet you.

LETTER XV.

Miſs OLIVIA HEBER to Miſs HEBER.

I HAVE been ſo continually hurried from place to place, by our dear Eudocia, that I have not had a moment's leiſure (ſince I diſpatched my little note to acquaint my father with my ſafe arrival) to write to you.

You expect, I know, a particular account of every thing I ſee and hear, in a place ſo new to me; but my lively friend, had ſhe time to comply with your wiſhes, would gratify your curioſity in a far more ſatisfactory manner than I can pretend to. I ſay, had ſhe time—The truth is, lord Avon can hardly bear to be out of her ſight: and when ſhe is not particularly engaged with him, ſhe is ſurrounded with company; ſo that ſhe can ſcarce call a moment her own. My lord himſelf complains

plains exceedingly, and wiſhes with the greateſt impatience for Tueſday.

After the ceremony, and dining at Sir William's, we are to ſet out for Richmond (lord Avon has a houſe there) and Mr. Mountney and myſelf are to be left with our new-married friends: Mr. Mountney is one of my lord's intimates.

I was never, you know, like our Eudocia, eager in purſuit of novelty: my books, my birds, my needle and my flowers, always afforded me amuſement enough to hinder me from being in the leaſt vapouriſh—and though you are more of my way of thinking than hers, you would bear the buſtle of the world, and the diſſipation of a faſhionable life better than I do, could you have been prevailed upon to leave our dear father. It was my affection for our young friend, and my inability to reſiſt her preſſing ſollicitations, which alone brought me hither: ſhe is, however, though with the ſame affectionate regard for me, ſo much more employed, than when ſhe was

at the Wood, that I really do not think myſelf neceſſary to her happineſs.

My lord, though obliging beyond my expectation, appears to me, ſometimes to grudge me the eſteem which ſhe diſcovers for me. He would not, if he knew both our hearts: he deſerves all the tenderneſs ſhe can beſtow upon him, and ſhe confeſſes to me how dearly ſhe loves him; but ſhe, undoubtedly is fond of company and public diverſions, while my lord ſeems to doat on nothing but her: he is attentive to the ſlighteſt motion of her eyes: he flies to obey her, to pleaſe her, to gratify every wiſh of her heart. He has preſented to her the richeſt and moſt elegant ſet of jewels, in the opinion of lady Tameworth, and of other people of taſte, imaginable:—but were I in Doſſy's place, I ſhould look upon my lord as the moſt valuable jewel in my poſſeſſion. He has, with a fine countenance expreſſive of every amiable virtue of the heart, a noble air, a melodious voice, and all the graces which a man can derive

from

from rank and education —They are juſt now running into my dreſſing-room, and inſiſt upon my going with them to my lord's houſe in Groſvenor-ſquare, that Eudocia may give ſome directions about the new-furniſhing the apartment deſigned for her. —I muſt, therefore, leave off writing—I have begged hard to be excuſed. My lord would have perſuaded Doſſy to let me ſtay, but ſhe will not hear of it.

IN CONTINUATION.

Richmond.

YOU will now, certainly, expect an account of the wedding-day;—but it was a day of ſuch ſplendor, gaiety, and confuſion, that I cannot, I am afraid, give you an adequate deſcription of it. Every body was fine. Our dear Eudocia was in a white and ſilver negligée, with her hair dreſſed in the moſt elegant taſte, and ornamented only with a large brilliant feather ſtuck on one ſide: but no ornaments can, in

my

my opinion, increaſe either her beauty, or my lord's. She looked like an angel, and behaved with a modeſt eaſy dignity, which ſufficiently diſcovered how well ſhe knew how to acquit herſelf in her new ſituation.

My lord, who was in a light ſuit of cloaths embroidered with ſilver, which infinitely became him, ſeemed to devour her with his eyes,—eyes of love, while her's, though generally caſt down, overpowered by the ſtare of admiration round her, were now and then raiſed up to him with a ſmile of ſweetneſs, which, momentary as it was, made him extremely well ſatisfied with it.

When the moſt ſuperb entertainment I had ever beheld was over, we amuſed ourſelves according to our inclinations.—The company invited were, Sir William and lady Tameworth, Mrs. Minchin, a relation of her ladyſhip's, Major Wallworth, a friend of Sir William's, general Brett, an uncle of lord Avon's, Sir Thomas and lady Pettly, related alſo to his lordſhip, Mr. Mountney and myſelf.

There

There was a quadrille table, to which lady Tameworth with lady Pettly, general Brett, and the major, ſat down: but on lord Avon's preſenting the mandoline to lady Avon, and begging the favour of a ſong, they laid down their cards, and were well paid for their attention—Lord and lady Avon charmed the whole room for a conſiderable time, alternately: the mandoline is a pretty lulling inſtrument, not very much unlike a lute, of which you have heard a deſcription from Sir George Tameworth; and a plaintive air is rendered more plaintive by being accompanied with it. The airs which my lord has taught his Eudocia, are the moſt pathetic ones to be conceived, and ſhe does them all poſſible juſtice.

I expreſſed myſelf in ſuch a manner about this inſtrument, that Mr. Mountney offered very politely to teach me to finger it; but I am much afraid I ſhall be both a dull and aukward ſcholar: for as warm an admirer as I am of muſic, I am quite ignorant

rant of the theory of it, and no leſs a ſtranger to the practical part. Mr. Mountney is a fine performer upon the violin and harpſichord.

In the evening, we four went to Richmond in my lord's elegant new coach, juſt time enough to arrive there before ſupper.

My lady was received, on her entrance into the hall, by all the attendants, whom my lord preſented to her; and then led her into a magnificent ſaloon, brilliant as midday, with luſtres. Soon afterwards we ſat down to ſupper in a parlour adjoining, in which every thing the moſt rare and elegant in the ſeaſon was ſerved up.

About twelve o'clock, at my lord's requeſt, I attended my dear friend to her dreſſing-room, where her woman, Mrs. Loyd, to whom ſhe has taken a great fancy, and who is very attentive to pleaſe, waited to undreſs her.—Mrs. Loyd then conducted me to my apartment.

Next day, after breakfaſt, we all took an airing, and viewed the environs, which are very pleaſant.—We have been to ſee the gardens here, and are to ſpend a day at Windſor, in a ſhort time. We chat and laugh; and all, except me, play and ſing.—Mr. Mountney, however, has, at length, prevailed on me to try my voice; and flatteringly tells me, that nothing but my exceſſive diffidence prevents me from excelling lady Avon.—My lord and lady appear, both, to have a deſign upon us, I think; they are always crying up Mountney to me; and letting me know what a good creature he is, and how few men ſo agreeable are ſo deſerving.—Perhaps he may be the uncommon man they deſcribe him, but I am not touched with his extraordinary merit.—I prefer the tranquility which I enjoy at this place, to the hurry and buſtle of London; but I ſhould be very well pleaſed to return to you, as I have now ſeen our dear friend happily married. She will

will not hear of my return: ſhe is all life and ſpirit, and really almoſt overpowers me with her vivacity. When you write, pray let me know how Edmund bears the news of her marriage.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

Sir CHARLES SEDLEY to Col. ACKWORTH.

AT laſt I have got ſight of this charming, this almoſt divine creature, lord Avon's angel; every man's angel!

I intended to hurry down to Richmond, ſoon after my arrival in London, but meeting Mountney by accident, he informed me that he had left them yeſterday in Groſvenor-ſquare, and offered to accompany me thither, if I was going.

I made no objection: we went, therefore, together.

I had raiſed my expectations very high, with regard to this glorious girl, from the encomiums, the extravagant encomiums, which I had heard on her perſonal charms; but ſhe exceeded them. She is quite a Hebe, a moſt enchanting creature! what eyes, hair, teeth, complexion! and then, ſuch

ſuch a bewitching ſprightlineſs! ſuch a tranſporting grace in every thing ſhe does! What quickneſs of apprehenſion;—what vicity, yet what delicacy of ſentiment!—Avon was a lucky fellow in ſeeing her before me; had I met with her, not the wealth of worlds ſhould have gained her from me.—I never yet beheld a woman ſo totally to my taſte.—I would even have committed matrimony, as little reliſh as I have for a ſtate of ſlavery, to have ſecured her.—She has made me appear ridiculous, I believe, already, as things are ſituated: for I could not take my eyes off her; let me die if I could.—Mountney ſtared at me as I ſtared at her; and Avon, had he not been engaged in the ſame delightful employment, looking at her, and liſtening to her, would have, no doubt, obſerved me, and not with the moſt unruffled aſpect, as I have a ſtrong notion that he is inclined to be jealous.

When dinner was over, and when the coffee things were removed, proud of the delightful treaſure he is poſſeſſed of, and

deſirous

deſirous of exhibiting all her perfections, he aſked her in a tone and manner, as if he had been rather a lover than a huſband, if ſhe would favour his friend, meaning me, with a ſong?

She made a condeſcending bow, ſmiling moſt alluringly at the ſame time, and, calling for her mandoline, ſung ſuch an air that it threw my ſoul into extaſies never felt till that delicious moment. I was quite diſſolved in rapture! — her fine eyes full of the moſt bewitching languor looked every ſyllable articulated by her melodious voice, while the whiteſt and moſt elegant fingers in the univerſe, brought out ſuch ſoft lulling ſounds, and while the gracefuleſt hand and arm were ſhewn to ſuch advantage.— Oh! Ackworth—there was no enduring it. —You might as well have ſtopt the ſun in his courſe, as have made me keep my tranſports within bounds.

When ſhe was going to lay down her inſtrument I roſe, took it gently from her with one hand, while I ſoftly preſſed her delicate

delicate fingers to my glowing lips with the other.

She bluſhed—I was wrong: yet her bluſh gave ſuch an additional richneſs to her complexion, that I could not repent of what I had done.

Lord Avon, however, looked diſpleaſed. Mountney knitted his brows at me.

Seeing myſelf eyed in ſo particular a manner, I began to think an apology neceſſary. On a ſudden, therefore, recovering my vivacity, I told lady Avon that my having been juſt come from Paris, where every lady permitted the free uſe of her hand, would, I hoped, procure my pardon, eſpecially when ſhe conſidered that ſhe had the fineſt one in the world.

A ſecond beautiful bluſh overſpread her charming face, accompanied with a ſmile.

Happening to turn my eyes towards Lord Avon, I ſaw him, with a pale countenance, biting his lips, and diſcovering the ſtrongeſt marks of jealouſy.

Soon

Soon afterwards I bruſhed off—but does he or Mountney, or any man think that I will not admire a fine girl when ſhe comes in my way? Beſides, this is a young creature uncommonly beautiful; ſhe has charms enough to ſet the whole world madding after her.

I ſpoke of her that night, at the Star and Garter, where I met a party of friends.—They all with one voice agreed ſhe was the handſomeſt woman that had appeared for many years.

Avon is a lucky devil; and yet, hang me if I ſhould not be almoſt afraid of marrying ſo brilliant a beauty, leſt I ſhould find it impoſſible to keep her to myſelf.—'Tis hardly reaſonable, faith, to expect conſtancy from ſuch a wife.

There was another pretty, little, fair, dove-like thing, who ſat by her, a Miſs Heber, though ſo far inferior to lady Avon, that I cannot think how I came to recollect her.—When I caſt my eyes on her by

chance, ſhe bluſhed more than her bright friend did for my preſumption.

Mountney ſeems to have a fancy that way.—He is always ſaying, you know, that if he ever marries, a tame houſhold thing muſt be the wife for him.—If ſo, why did he frown at my freedom with lady Avon? —Let every man mind his own buſineſs: mine is the gratification of every wiſh of my heart.

LETTER

LETTER XVII.

Miſs OLIVIA HEBER to Miſs HEBER.

HOW unreaſonable are you, my dear Alicia, to complain of the ſhortneſs of my letters, when your own contain ſo few paragraphs? You ought rather to ſend me your obſervations on every thing which I communicate to you. Short, however, as your letter is, you have found room to recommend a man to me of whom you know nothing but from the little I have ſaid about him. You ſhall not chuſe for your ſiſter at ſo great a diſtance, nor will ſhe fix herſelf till ſhe has ſeen more.

Lord Avon has a number of friends, but the moſt lively—I had almoſt put an *o* inſtead of an *i*, into *that* word—is a Sir Charles Sedley.—I cannot pretend to deſcribe either his perſon or behaviour; there is a nameleſs ſomething in each of them, which I never

obſerved in any other man, and he ſeems as much taken with our dear Eudocia.—What have I ſaid?—'Tis well you don't ſee me, my Alicia—but he really has ſuch a pair of eyes that there is ſcarce any looking at them.—He would be quite in his element among our young country people, for I never met with any body who loved romping ſo exceſſively.—He has been down at Richmond with us a few days, and we have had ſuch races in the garden!—Sir Charles runs after lady Avon, and ſhe flies after me—My lord catches his Eudocia: poor I fall to Mountney's lot, who, when he has ſaid a heap of fine things, lets me go, telling me that I had rather be with Sir Charles.—You cannot ſee me, ſiſter—but there is no compariſon to be made between the two men.

Oh! bleſs me! Doſſy juſt this moment ran into the room, and peeped over my ſhoulder before I could hide my letter. She rallies me to death—as Mr. Mountney ſays, and declares that ſhe will ſhew ſhew it to

Sir Charles, to let him ſee what a conqueſt he has made: I begged and prayed, but in vain—ſhe would not liſten to me. Surely, our friend was not always ſo inflexible.

She hurried out of the room with my letter: I followed her till I was almoſt out of breath.

Mountney met me; and catching hold of me, aſked me what was the matter?

Colouring like fire, I told him the truth —"Lady Avon has ſtole my letter to my ſiſter."

"To a lover you mean!" ſaid he, "well, only promiſe to let me have a ſight of it; and I will, this moment, get it from lady Avon, and reſtore it to you: and no creature elſe ſhall ſee it but the happy man for whom it is deſigned."

But I muſt have my letter back again, without thoſe conditions.

While we were ſtriving who ſhould have their own way, lady Avon carries the letter to my lord, who is all goodneſs and conſideration; and who begged her, with the

moſt tender earneſtneſs, to give me back my paper—The wild thing, you know her manner, ſtill refuſed.

To complete my confuſion, in came Sir Charles.

You cannot conceive how I looked; every body pitied me but that thoughtleſs Doſſy—I bluſhed—I was ready to cry.

Sir Charles perceiving my diſtreſs, flew haſtily to lady Avon, caught her round the waiſt with one hand, and declared that he muſt either have the paper or a kiſs.

My lord looked agitated; my lady frowned; but Sir Charles ſaid ſomething ſo very pleaſant upon the occaſion, that it diſarmed her anger, and ſhe burſt into ſo violent a fit of laughter, that I actually believe he would have ſtolen the threatened kiſs, if my lord's aſpect had not awed him: he therefore ſeized my poor unfortunate letter.

Do but think, Alcey, how I trembled! I felt as if I was ſinking to the floor,

Mountney ran to my aſſiſtance—breaking from him I cried; "the paper, the paper."

He was juſt going to procure it for me from the perſon who had ſeized it from her ladyſhip; when Sir Charles brought it to me, with ſuch a bow—Oh! it had ten thouſand meanings in it. But I will not ſay another word, leſt our giddy friend ſhould ſerve me ſo again.

LETTER XVIII.

Mr. MOUNTNEY to Colonel ACKWORTH.

HAS Sedley written to you? has he told you that he is in love with lord Avon's wife? Whether he is ſerious or not I ſhall not attempt to determine; but this I know, he behaves with great impropriety.

Lady Avon is uncommonly handſome; very young, and naturally of a chearful temper; of a very lively diſpoſition indeed!—Her vivacity is extremely pleaſing, and I firmly believe that ſhe is as innocent as ſhe is alluring: but that wild amorous rogue Sedley takes too much advantage of her free and ſprightly behaviour. I ſee plainly enough that his familiarities make lord Avon exceedingly uneaſy, as he is extravagantly fond of her, and they may lead her into indiſcretions for which ſhe may be afterwards heartily ſorry. If

any

any miſchief ariſes from thoſe indiſcretions, Sir Charles, as the firſt aggreſſor, will be anſwerable for them. Let him, therefore, take care.—You are more intimate with him than I am, and will, I know, from this hint, be conſiderate enough to put him upon his guard. Lady Avon is, with all her giddineſs—but that is rather too ſtrong an expreſſion — a ſenſible, good-natured woman, and an affectionate wife: ſhe is alſo conſcious of her perſonal charms, and loves the world.—She has ſeen little of it; her paſſion for it is conſequently the more eaſily to be accounted for, and the more excuſable. She is fond of dreſs, diverſions, company, and converſation: the two laſt ſeem to have the preference, and ſhe does not appear to be ſufficiently nice in the choice of her acquaintance, nor to be ſenſible that it is highly neceſſary for us to keep ſome of our thoughts to ourſelves, and very imprudent to talk upon every ſubject to all ſorts of people. Lady Avon is certainly too indiſcriminately free in her

behaviour: my lord is, I can ſee, frequently hurt by that behaviour; and Sedley, I am afraid, is coxcomb enough to take her general freedoms as particular advances to himſelf: though I'll lay any wager that ſhe never intends to diſtinguiſh him by her carriage.

I wiſh I could ſay the ſame of a pretty little artleſs creature who is her intimate friend, though a very different character, and evidently ſighs for Sedley as much as I do for her—I was going to ſay—but 'tis not come to that yet.—I ſhall never make myſelf uneaſy about a girl who likes another man better: but if Olivia's heart was at her own diſpoſal, I would try to become maſter of it, becauſe the gentleneſs of her temper pleaſes me; and becauſe I think that her taſte and mine are pretty much alike. A man can never be happy with the beſt woman in the world for his wife, if their opinions and inclinations happen to be totally different.—There is, I doubt, this unſuitableneſs between lord and lady

Avon;

Avon; the former loves the latter too well to be happy himſelf, or to ſuffer her to be ſo. In ſhort, he abſolutely teazes her with his tenderneſs; and 'tis pleaſant to hear how archly ſhe rallies him about it: her raillery, however, though extremely delicate, and frequently mingled with fondneſs, he knows not how to take; and he is, I believe, very often confoundedly chagrined by it.—Sedley avails himſelf as much as poſſible of the indiſcretion on one ſide, and of the jealouſy on the other.—He does not do as he would be done by, in ſuch a ſituation; and ſo pray tell him.

LETTER XIX.

Miſs OLIVIA HEBER to Miſs HEBER.

WE are come to town again, and are always in ſuch a hurry of pleaſure, as our dear Eudocia calls it, that we have, I think, hardly time to breathe. She laughs at my complaints of our diſſipated life, from morning to night; and tells my lord, whoſe ſentiments correſpond with mine upon the occaſion, that we have neither of us any taſte or ſpirit. You would wonder, indeed, at her perpetual vivacity—She was always, indeed, by much, the moſt chearful of us all three; but were you to ſee her now, you would be quite amazed.

Yeſterday, in the afternoon, ſhe declared that ſhe was the happieſt creature in the world.

Lord

Lord Avon, taking her hand, and kiſſing it, ſaid, "How you tranſport me, my deareſt life, by that declaration! May it ever be in my power to make you happy; to increaſe your felicity."

He then immediately aſked her, if ſhe would go down to his houſe in Devonſhire?

"Oh," cried ſhe, in her lively manner, "I can't think of it: I have not the leaſt deſire to leave London;—I find new pleaſures here every day."

"Why, you have often told me," replied my lord, gravely, as if not thoroughly pleaſed with her refuſal, "that you were very happy in Derbyſhire: you cannot, therefore, have any violent diſlike to the country."

"No," anſwered ſhe, "not as the country. I love the freſh air, I admire fine proſpects, I am charmed with rural views, and doat on flowers; but, after all, there is a ſameneſs in the country, which is extremely tireſome.—No—

give me London and all its joys—The perpetual variety here is enchanting," added ſhe, running to the glaſs; "but I muſt go and dreſs for Soho.—Will you go to-night, my lord?"

"Are you going out again, my dear," ſaid he; "I was in hopes that you had been ſo fatigued with the play, and lady Shuffle's rout together, laſt night, as to wiſh to ſpend this evening at home with me."

"Only hear him, Olly," cried ſhe; "to tell me he was in hopes I had been fatigued—I am afraid, my lord, all your good-breeding will be loſt in doating,"—added ſhe, with a laugh; "but as long as we ſpend the evening together, 'tis no matter whether at home or abroad, you know."

My lord, not being of that opinion, ſaid, "You have often heard me declare myſelf, madam, no admirer of Mrs. Cornely's rooms."

"As

"As you please, my lord," replied our ſprightly friend, with a ſmiling curtſy, "then we will leave you to enjoy your hours according to your own taſte."

"I cannot enjoy them without your ſociety, Eudocia," ſaid he, with a ſerious air.

"Well now, that is unaccountable to me—I love your company better than any body's I can name; but yet a little variety now and then, makes it a million times more agreeable: and when I have been galloping half the town over, I have a vaſt deal more reliſh for home: it is, therefore, for your intereſt, my lord, to indulge me in going abroad."

"I do, I will indulge you in every thing, my life," ſaid he, fondly; "but if you loved as ardently as I do, Eudocia, you could not bear abſence—it would make you as wretched as it makes me."—

"Not in the leaſt, my lord; our tempers are different, tho' we are equally affectionate."

At that moment entered Sir Charles Sedley.

"Here," cried the lively creature; "only aſk Sir Charles, my lord, if he is not of my way of thinking?"

"I don't want to appeal to a third perſon, madam," ſaid my lord, peeviſhly.

"Well, as you pleaſe—Come, then, Olly, let us go and dreſs."

"Stay, my lady," cried Sir Charles, catching hold of her hand, "may I not have the honour of hearing in what point you conceived me to be ſo happy as to think like your ladyſhip?"

"Pſhaw—no—not now,"— anſwered ſhe, with a lively ſmile—"I am engaged to the Soho aſſembly, and I ſuppoſe you will be there."

"Undoubtedly," replied Sir Charles," with a look of the greateſt ſatisfaction; "I will ſtay and wait on you."—

My lord fetched a deep ſigh, croſſed his arms, and walked haſtily up and down the room.

We

We left them, and retired to our reſpective apartments.

When I was dreſſed—I was ſoon dreſſed—I hurried down to the parlour, not at all liking the appearance of things.

I found my lord ſitting in a thoughtful poſture, with one leg over the other, and his head leaning upon his hand.

Sir Charles was turning round one of the Chineſe figures over the chimney:

As ſoon as I came in—"Don't you think this mandarin aſtoniſhingly agreeable," ſaid he: "how ſhould you like to be kiſſed by a pretty fellow, with a grey beard and whiſkers?" "Come," added he, "you ſhall try which is moſt pleaſant: let me ſee you kiſs this pretty figure, and I will kiſs you."

I broke from him, and going to my lord, whom I greatly pitied, aſked him if he was not well.

Down came my lady, before he could anſwer me, divinely dreſt, and blazing with jewels.

Sir

Sir Charles made her a very high compliment upon her appearance, to which ſhe replied, with a ſmile, and then turning to my lord, who had not once lifted up his eyes at her entrance—"Bleſs me! what's the matter, my lord?" ſaid ſhe, going up to him and taking his hand.

"Nothing, madam," replied he, coolly—

"Now you don't tell the truth," ſaid ſhe, ſitting down by him, on the ſopha.

"I would not interrupt your pleaſure," anſwered he, with no ſmall emotion; "you have promiſed yourſelf a great deal in going out; don't let me deprive you of it, ſince you can find none in ſtaying at home with me."—

The two laſt words were ſpoken with a particular emphaſis.

My lady then looked grave.

"Nay, my lord, if you are diſpoſed to make a ſerious affair of it, I muſt e'en ſtay at home, I think."—

"No,"—replied my lord, hardly able to articulate, "no, madam, you ſhall not ſtay if it is not agreeable to you."— He

He then turned from her, and ſhe ſmiled at Sir Charles: but, tho' apparently inattentive, he catched her ſmile in a moment, roſe up again and again, walking diſcontentedly about the room.

"My dear Olivia," ſaid Eudocia to me, "ſhall you be much diſappointed by ſtaying at home to-night?"

"Not in the leaſt, my lady," ſaid I, pitying poor lord Avon from my heart.

"I beg I may not deprive you of any pleaſure," ſaid he.

"I am very indifferent about what is generally called pleaſure, my lord; but were I not, I would freely give it up to make you happy with my lady."

"Excellent girl!" ſaid he, faintly, with a deep ſigh, looking at his Eudocia, who was chatting with Sir Charles—

Sir Charles, finding her determined to ſtay, took up his hat and moved off.

Lady Avon then ſaid to me, "Come, Olly, ſince we cannot dance abroad, let us dance at home," beginning a minuet.

Lord

Lord Avon, tranſported at this eaſy compliance with his will, flew to her, caught her in his arms, gave her a thouſand kiſſes, called her his angel, and begged her to pardon any thing that he might have thrown out to offend her; and to attribute it to the exceſs of his love.

"Since it is love alone, my lord, that makes you ſo ſtupid, I muſt excuſe you, I think; but 'tis pity that a paſſion, capable of rendering ſo many people amiable, ſhould have ſo different an effect upon you."

This ſpeech, too thoughtleſsly delivered, had almoſt ſpoilt all again.

My lord looked exceedingly diſconcerted, ſaying; "I am moſt unhappy in diſpleaſing the only perſon in the world, to whom, I flattered myſelf, I ſhould always be agreeable."

She burſt out into a loud laugh at him; and had not Mr. Mountney made his appearance, I don't know how the evening

evening would have gone off. He and I together, ſtrove with all our powers, to amuſe them both. My lady, indeed, can always divert herſelf, but my lord can receive diverſion only from her.

Thus, my dear Alicia, you ſee, that a marriage, tho' founded on inclination on both ſides, does not neceſſarily produce happineſs—I almoſt begin to think that thoſe are the happieſt who never marry, nor indeed, let their thoughts run upon matrimony.—You are not of my mind, I fancy.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

Sir CHARLES SEDLEY to Col. ACKWORTH.

IT is as I ſaid—He is as jealous of her as the devil—So much the better for me—She will be the ſooner thrown into my arms.—What a delicious thought!—and yet I muſt move fair and ſoftly, and let neither of them gueſs my deſigns—The dear creature is, I abſolutely believe, as far from ſuſpecting any evil, as from intending to commit it; and ſhe, at preſent, I dare ſay, prefers this huſband of hers to all men. Avon, you know, has every requiſite to pleaſe; he is young, handſome, and well bred: but there wants a ſimilarity of humour between them—His whole delight is in the poſſeſſion of ſuch a beautiful creature, but her heart is not entirely devoted to her huſband; the pleaſures of the world have made a pretty

pretty deep impreſſion upon it.—Only think of a girl bred in the moſt retired part of Derbyſhire, who had ſcarce ſeen any human creatures out of her own family; all antiques themſelves,—to be brought on a ſudden into gay life, and to be exhibited to admiring crowds: married to a man diſtractedly fond of her, before ſhe had an opportunity of knowing whether he would have been her choice or not; adored and courted as much after marriage as before—(How many women would have their heads turned, ſo circumſtanced!)—Yet I firmly believe, that if he diſcovered no kind of ſuſpicion, and made no attempts to oppoſe her inclination, ſhe would ſtill make an excellent wife; ay, as faithful and domeſtic as if ſhe was ever ſo ugly—For my part, who am, you know, not fond of tying people together for life, and making them anſwer for impoſſibilities; were I obliged to enter into the uncertain ſtate of matrimony, I ſhould much ſooner chuſe a woman

man rather deficient in beauty, than remarkable for a fine perſon; becauſe I ſhould then have hopes that ſhe would love me near as well as herſelf—A beautiful miſtreſs, but a plain wife, for me.

Your letter is this moment arrived.—

And ſo Mountney has been prating to you upon paper, about my behaviour to lady Avon!—What the devil has he to do in the affair? He is not married to her: and if he and you have conſcientious ſcruples, what are they to me?—She is the wife of my friend—Very well; and what's that to the purpoſe? I ſhall not openly come to action, but if ſhe ſhould trip in an unguarded hour—By heavens! there's rapture in the very idea—ſhe will be a fair prize.—

Olly, as the divine Eudocia calls her, will, I fear, be curſedly in my way: ſhe is, on a nearer acquaintance, a very pretty little delicate creature: and I ſhould not be ſorry to take her into the bargain.—She ſeems to have no ſort of averſion to

me,

me, far from it—but, I doubt, ſhe is too good for me—She has no taſte for the pleaſures of the world, and provided ſhe lived with the man ſhe loved, ſhe would, I'll venture to affirm, be as happy in a cottage as on a throne. She is tender, compaſſionate, and mild as a ſummer breeze; pities Avon, when he is provoked by the lively ſallies of Eudocia, and gently endeavours to lower her vivacity, and to render her wit leſs hurtful, by blunting the edge of it. She is a woman, whom moſt men would pronounce amiable—Mountney thinks her exceſſively ſo—but ſhe is cold and indifferent to him: modeſt and timid to an extreme, ſhe is almoſt afraid to hear her own voice.

I ſurprized her t'other day, ſinging ſoftly, but like a nightingale, upon my ſoul, to lady Avon's mandoline — She bluſhed, as if ſhe had been doing ſome very bad thing; nor could I prevail on her to warble another note—If I once get her, I dare ſwear I ſhould keep her all to myſelf:

myſelf:' but ſo many ſweets would be quite ſurfeiting.—What a delicious contraſt between her and Eudocia!—Let them both take care of me—The firſt has nothing but her virtue for her defence; the laſt relies on her vivacity—No bad armour againſt a tender paſſion—But yet I may conquer even her, when ſhe leaſt thinks of being overcome.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

LORD and lady Avon have had the luckieſt falling out for me, that could have happened: only I am afraid that the quarrel, by the officiouſneſs of Olivia, will be made up. I muſt ſecure her firſt, or ſhe will ſpoil all.

We were in high mirth, t'other night; that is, we four—a very pretty *partie quarrée*.—Mountney out of town—Dancing happened to be the ſubject—and I, by chance, mentioned quite a new ſtep in the cotillion, which I had learnt at Paris.

"Oh! ſhew it me, ſhew it me, dear Sir Charles," cried Eudocia, ſtarting from her chair.

I was upon my legs in a moment, caught her fine ſoft hand in mine, and

by ſome accident or other—faith I had no deſign—down we came both together upon the carpet.

This was an opportunity not to be loſt, however; and I made the moſt of it, by ſtealing ſuch a delicious kiſs!—The very remembrance of it fires my ſoul at this inſtant.

Up ſhe roſe, ſat gravely down by my lord, who looked in an agony, and ſaid, "I ſhall take care how I deſire any thing of you again, Sir Charles."

"I beg your pardon, my charming lady Avon," ſaid I; "it was a meer accident."

"Such accidents, Sir," ſaid my lord, warmly, "are not to be endured."

"How, my lord!—ſurely you are not ſerious about ſuch a trifle."

"No—no,"—cried ſhe, "it was but a trifle; and therefore we wo'nt hear any more about it."

This ſpeech put a ſtop to any farther altercation between us; but it alſo ſealed

up

up my lord's mouth, who ſat ſulky, with his eyes fixed upon his wife; while ſhe, recovering all her former chearfulneſs, chatted with the ſame freedom and eaſe, as if nothing had happened.

Finding my lord continue in the ſullens, I began to dread the threatened ſtorm, which might, by driving me from the houſe for ever, entirely demoliſh my flattering projects: I, therefore, thought it moſt prudent to make a retreat.

Juſt when I was on the other ſide of the parlour door, ſeeing nobody in the next room, I ſtepped in to hear how things went.

My lady thus began.

"In the vapours again, my lord? I wonder you are ſo fond of ſpending your evenings at home, as they really have ſo melancholy an effect upon you: being alone, I find."—

"Had I been alone, madam," interrupted he, "I had not, probably, been diſguſted at any thing: but 'tis no laugh-

ing matter for me, to ſee ſuch liberties taken with my wife; and to be certain, at the ſame time, that they are too agreeable to be reſiſted."

"My poor ſuſpicious dear! could you then really imagine that I was pleaſed with ſuch liberties, eſpecially when you heard me reprove him for them?"

"And how did you reprove him—Only by laughing off the inſult, and chatting with him the next moment, as if you were rather pleaſed than offended with his impertinence—'Sdeath! ſuch a behaviour is ſufficient to encourage all the coxcombs in town to be impudent."

"Hold, my lord; the warmth of your temper about this ſilly accident, is more injurious to me than the thing itſelf: and it was the apprehenſion of that warmth which made me willing, fearful as I was of a quarrel, to ſmother my reſentment."—

"A mighty plauſible apology—indeed!—And ſo I muſt tamely ſit by and ſuffer

ſuffer fellows to take indecent liberties with my wife, for fear of a quarrel? I would rather face death a thouſand times, than bear ſuch treatment; and ſo would you, if you had not reliſhed his inſolence."

"Very well, my lord: you will perhaps repent of this behaviour by and by, when you know that I think the man who dares to ſuſpect me wrongfully, deſerves to have his ſuſpicions confirmed."—

At this inſtant Olivia cried, "Dear lady Avon!"—

My lord anſwered, ſomewhat fiercely, "Heavens! madam—Is it poſſible? Can theſe be your ſentiments? Had I known them before, I ſhould not have had courage to venture upon the woman who entertained them, for a wife."—

"'Tis pity indeed, my lord, for I was your free choice—nay, you forced me from my relations, and almoſt compelled me to be yours—I could not, in truth, become the wife of any other man, with the leaſt delicacy."—

Delicacy! — Delicacy!" replied he, walking about the room with haſty ſtrides— "Heavens!—To have all my love, all my doating fondneſs come to this? Diſtraction!—How—how have I been deceived!"

"No, my lord; you have not yet been deceived; but take care you never provoke me to deceive you; that's all."

Here the noiſe of approaching feet obliged me to remove from my hiding-place: but curious beyond expreſſion, to know the reſult of this buſtle which I had occaſioned, I determined to put a good face upon the matter, and to call in the morning.

To my great ſatisfaction I found Olivia alone, writing.

She looked extremely ſolemn at me, at firſt, and roſe in order to leave the room, pretending to be engaged; but I replaced her in her chair, and kept her hand faſt, that ſhe might not eſcape me, while I confeſſed the thorough *etourderie* of

of my behaviour; ſwearing that it was entirely unpremeditated, and that I was exceſſively concerned at having been ſo unlucky as to produce any diſputes between lord and lady Avon, for whom I had ſo ſincere an eſteem.

"Diſpute!" cried ſhe, with looks of ſurprize—

"Yes, my dear Miſs Heber," ſaid I: "to confeſs the truth, I heard a little of it before I went out of the houſe—In ſhort, George, I feigned ſo much contrition, and was ſo ſoft, and ſo ſoothing, and preſſed her hand ſo often to my boſom and my lips, that the dear, little melting rogue—Upon my life ſhe is very handſome—told me every thing: that is, ſhe, in general terms, told me my lord was highly offended with my lady, for taking my part—(mind that Ackworth)—and my lady was too warm—Charming creature! She was angry with the poor devil of a huſband, for interfering where he had no buſineſs—adding, that ſhe had

endeavoured, as much as poſſible, to make them as good friends as ever.—(What a ſweet girl is this Olivia!) and that ſhe had left them as happy as ſhe wiſhed them to be.—Not a ſyllable do I believe of the laſt words.

The entrance of ſome morning viſiters, alias intruders, prevented my hearing any farther particulars. Swearing again that I meant nothing, and that my lord was wrong to be ſo alarmed at a meer romping bout, I left her; left her, if I am not much miſtaken, with deep impreſſions in my favour.—I took care to whiſper a few tender things in her ear, which brought ſuch ſighs from her pretty gentle heart.—Poor Olivia!—But ſhe need not ſigh; I have love enough for them both: a deviliſh deal of fire in my compoſition—And here you have the firſt part of the Jealous Huſband.—

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

Lord Avon to Mr. Mountney.

OH! my friend, I have been half diſtracted ſince you left me, and am not yet the man I was — I fear I never ſhall be ſo again. — You well know with what ardor I doat upon my Eudocia, who, every moment ſince the bleſt one which gave her to my arms, has been improving both upon my fancy and my heart. Yet, though I joy in her vivacity, and think it gives new charms to her features; I ſometimes tremble leſt it ſhould carry her too far. I believe, indeed, that ſhe is as innocent as ſhe is lovely, but I am afraid that her ſprightlineſs may be looked upon as an encouragement to coxcombs to flutter about her; nay it certainly does encourage them. —I almoſt envy every man the pleaſure of beholding her.

Sedley is too particular in his behaviour to her; and ſhe, from meer inattention, or from her lively diſpoſition, which perpetually prompts her to chat with every body who comes in her way, does not check his freedoms ſo much as I could wiſh. He is very apt to be impertinent in his carriage to women.—He was ſo, t'other night, to a great degree, to Eudocia.—He affected to laugh off his inſolence, which I would have reſented had not my wife ſtopped me.—Her reſiſtance and raillery together, threw me into ſuch a diſturbed ſtate that I ſcarce knew what I ſaid.—During the heat of my paſſion, I upbraided her with having appeared pleaſed with Sedley's behaviour. She, though good-natured, is very warm and haſty alſo; and therefore replied in a manner which rather whetted than allayed my fury—and I was weak enough to let out a wiſh that I had never married her.—She then accuſed me of having clandeſtinely taken her from her family.—One indiſcreet word commonly produces another, and

and neither of us were prudent enough to ſtop: ſo that things grew from bad to worſe; and I actually began to fear that ſhe would act agreeably to her threats. Under ſuch a terrifying apprehenſion, therefore; for ſhe is, you know, abſolutely neceſſary to my exiſtence, I became ſilent. —She affected, at the ſame time, a total indifference; took no notice of me, but talked to Olivia, who endeavoured, by ſeveral little arts, to draw me into the converſation. That girl has a heavenly temper; but then, ſhe is too tame a character to pleaſe. She wants my Eudocia's vivacity and variety—and yet you will tell me that the tortures of which I complain ariſe from the vivacity which I admire—Would ſhe be ſprightly only with me!—But I want impoſſibilities.

However, I availed myſelf of Olivia's prudent and obliging conduct, in order to make my peace with my own dear girl; but ſhe did not pay any ſort of regard to me—ſhe ſmiled with the utmoſt ſatisfaction

at her friend, but would not caſt a ſingle glance on me.

I caught her hand more than once, as I ſat by her, but ſhe drew it back with an angry haſtineſs.

Supper came, at laſt, to my relief—ſhe ſat down to table with the greateſt compoſure, and ate as if nothing had happened, while I was too much agitated to ſwallow a morſel.—She did not even condeſcend to mention my not eating; but behaved, before the ſervants, as uſual, talking of trivial things.—I was charmed at her diſcretion, while I was pained by her indifference; being ever of opinion that domeſtic miſunderſtandings, as well as domeſtic endearments, ſhould, if poſſible, be kept private.

When the cloth was taken away, finding myſelf unable to check my raptures any longer, I went to take her in my arms, and ſeal our reconciliation with an ardent kiſs.—She made a reſiſtance which both ſurpriſed and ſhocked me.

"Have

"Have I then offended in a manner never to be forgiven, my life?" ſaid I, with looks which diſcovered every ſenſation of my heart, yearning for pardon and a return of love.—"Tell me, my Eudocia, tell me only what I ſhall do to merit the forgiveneſs for which I aſk—I cannot live and be thus treated with the coldeſt neglect —by heavens, it is not to be endured."

Having uttered thoſe words, I turned from her to hide emotions which I was, at once, aſhamed and afraid to diſcover. I could hardly ſupport myſelf: my whole frame ſhook.

"Do you not think now," ſaid ſhe with her ſweet enchanting voice, "that you have been wrong in flying into ſuch a paſſion, only becauſe I loved you too well to ſuffer you to fight: for a duel muſt have enſued, if your reſentment had been indulged; and upon my account too, againſt a giddy-headed young fellow, who is too thoughtleſs to do any thing with any meaning in it."

I would

I would hear no more—I preſſed her, no longer reluctant to my doating boſom, and almoſt ſtifled her with kiſſes; and as ſoon as I could recover my breath, begged her, a thouſand times, to pardon a folly for which I hated myſelf more than ſhe could, poſſibly, hate me; as I knew well the goodneſs of her heart.

"How can you talk of hating?" replied ſhe, laying her hand careleſly on my ſhoulder, and looking up to me with eyes ſo bright, and yet ſo ſweetly tender, while her lovely mouth was dimpled with the ſmiles of love and good-humour, that I never felt ſuch an ecſtatic moment. I could have looked away my life, ſo ſtrongly were my eyes attracted to her, had not my other ſenſes urged me to employ my time much better.—I kiſſed with tranſport inexpreſſible, thoſe enchanting eyes which derived new luſtre for my endearments. She appeared, herſelf, to enjoy with inconceivable delight, every proof of my tenderneſs.

On a ſudden, ſtarting from me, ſhe cried, looking at once fondly and archly at me, "you forgot Olivia, my lord."

I had, indeed, forgot all the world but my adorable angel. Thinking, however, ſome apology neceſſary to that amiable girl who had done her part towards ſo delicious a reconciliation, I made the beſt I could think of, and we ſpent the remainder of the evening in the moſt agreeable chat.

Sedley called, the next morning, when I was out, but ſhe did not come down to him.

He now pretends to make love, ſeriouſly, to Olivia, telling me, that on finding her coy, he paid his court to lady Avon to induce her to be his friend, and to ſoften Miſs Heber's heart in his favour.

I don't know how to believe a ſyllable of all this: I rather am of opinion that Olivia likes him. He is, you know, the ſort of man who generally captivates the other ſex: he has a mighty ſpecious, inſinuating way

way of behaving to them. Such a fellow often ſupplants a more valuable and amiable competitor. Sedley is ſuch an artful devil; and has a head ſo full of expedients! never out of ſpirits—never out of countenance—actually, I don't believe he feels for any human creature but himſelf—the innocent, gentle Olivia, is too good for him.

My wife has got a new admirer—no wonder—every man who ſees her muſt acknowledge the ſuperiority of her beauty.

The earl of Cheſter ſaw her at the opera t'other night, joined us, and ſaid ſo many fine things, that I was glad to carry her home—and yet, Mountney, I do not diſtruſt her—I diſtruſt myſelf. I happened to ſee her upon her firſt appearance in the world, before ſhe had time to look about her. She was the choice of my heart; but poſſibly, if ſhe had not been taken, as it were, by ſurpriſe, I ſhould not have been the choice of hers. From this ſuppoſition ariſe very tormenting ſenſations; and I

am now greatly alarmed leſt ſhe ſhould ſee a man more agreeable in her eyes; a man who may, perhaps, make her feel that lively paſſion for him which I ever felt, which I ſtill feel for her.—What a diſtracting apprehenſion—I will not indulge it—I hope I have no reaſon to be alarmed—at preſent, ſhe is moſt obliging, and the affection which ſhe diſcovers for me—if it is not ſincere, ſhe is the moſt finiſhed hypocrite in the univerſe. She has not, indeed, the melting ſenſibility of ſome women; but ſenſibility is not in our power—I love her, however, almoſt to idolatry—yet while I adore her, I tremble.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

Sir CHARLES SEDLEY to Col. ACKWORTH.

MATTERS are in a train—Now I go on ſwimmingly with Olivia: if ſhe does not yield too ſoon I may carry my point: I have no other fear.—Don't miſtake me, George, I would not be thought to inſinuate any thing to leſſen the lady's virtue. She is, I believe, as chaſte as unſunned ſnow—I could, indeed, melt her to my wiſhes, in a ſhort time, I fancy, but I am, at preſent, to perſonate the hon-our-able lover; I ſhould act quite out of character, in expecting indiſcretions; though your very tender lovers do not always keep up their decorums with the ſtricteſt propriety: and it has happened that a lady cloſely beſieged has made a quick ſurrender. — You may imagine now, perhaps, that the ſurrender is the pleaſanteſt part of the affair—I ſhould think

think ſo myſelf, probably, in any other ſituation, but as I am now circumſtanced —I think in a very different manner; Eudocia—you underſtand me—is the noble game I have in view. Olivia only ſerves to facilitate my deſigns, by decoying it into my toils. When I have done with the former, however, the latter will drop into my mouth of courſe: but they muſt fall decently, and in order. Were I to begin with Olivia, and ſhould ſhe happen to tell tales—who can truſt a woman?—I ſhould be thrown out—jockeyed—routed horſe and foot.—Eudocia is quite a different ſort of perſon; by no means eaſily to be ſeduced—great art and much addreſs will be neceſſary to gain her: but if I ſucceed, the pleaſure, the honour reſulting from my victory will largely repay me for all my trouble. The worſt of it is, I have no room to hope for ſucceſs, but by complaining to her ladyſhip of Miſs Heber's ſhyneſs, and indifference, and prevailing on her to be my friend, to perſuade the dear creature

to

to liſten to me.—Now the truth is, the dear creature doats on me already, and ſucks in ſuch comfortable draughts of flattery from my deluding tongue; and ſo much love from my languiſhing eyes, that ſhe makes an interceſſor altogether an unneceſſary being.

I muſt be blind: I muſt pretend to have met with infinite diſcouragement from my little, tender love-ſick girl—She has, indeed, repulſed me more than once, by telling that ſhe was not her own miſtreſs, and that her father alone had a right to diſpoſe of her.—But I muſt keep clear of making application to him, if poſſible—Hitherto I have done it by declaring that I love her with too much delicacy to be contented meerly with her father's conſent; and that I muſt be certain of having entirely won her heart, before I offered any propoſals to him—hoping he can have no objection to my fortune, &c. &c. if ſhe has none.

Thus far I have proceeded with tolerable dexterity; but theſe modeſt girls are ſo preſſing,

preſſing, that really they put a man quite out of countenance. They have not the leaſt idea of doing the buſineſs, and being ſnug. As ſoon as the word *love* is out of your mouth, *up* bounces Miſs with her face as red as a turkey-cock, and cries, "Oh, Sir! you muſt ſpeak to my father." I actually wonder they are not aſhamed; but I ſhall teach Miſs Olivia a little more decency, before I have done with her; and ſo good night.—

Harkee, George—no more preaching. I hope you don't communicate what I write under the ſeal of ſecrecy to Mountney.—I ſhall then, indeed, be blown to the devil.—But I know you are a man of honour.

LETTER

LETTER XXIV.

Miſs Olivia Heber to Miſs Heber.

I HAVE taken up and laid down my pen, twenty times: I want to open my heart to you, my dear ſiſter—but I know not how to begin—I cannot, however, be eaſy, till I have your ſentiments upon an affair which engroſſes my attention.

I have frequently, you know, mentioned Sir Charles Sedley, in my letters, as the moſt agreeable of men. You muſt remember alſo, that I told you he was a great admirer of lady Avon.—He is ſo—every body indeed, admires her, becauſe ſhe is ſo very handſome; but he now declares and proteſts, from morning to night, that he loves only me: adding that he muſt pay court to my lady, in order to be permitted to ſee me at her houſe; and that he muſt admire and eſteem my charming friend, for my ſake.

I hope

I hope he does not deceive me, my Alcey, for I feel a partiality in his favour which I cannot deſcribe.—I would have referred him to my father: certainly my father cannot reject a man of his faſhion and fortune—I have not told him my ſentiments yet—Time enough;—but tho' I have not declared the ſecrets of my heart with my tongue, every look, every motion will, I am afraid, betray me—When he is abſent, my ſpirits are ſunk to a degree beyond expreſſion; when he returns, tho' expected, my heart flutters; my face glows, and I wiſh to hide myſelf any where from his obſervation. Doſſy, who rallies every body, does not even ſpare her poor friend.

Sir Charles, finding me in confuſion this morning, told me that he would talk to lady Avon upon this ſubject, and that if ſhe would not mind him, he would puniſh her for it; but I begged him to let her alone, leſt my lord, who is certainly inclined to be jealous, ſhould be uneaſy.

"You

"You are quite miſtaken," replied he; "my lord knows where my heart is, too well, to have any diſagreeable ſuſpicions; he knows it is in that dear boſom," continued he, preſſing me in his arms, and attempting to kiſs my neck.

I broke from him haſtily, tho' I trembled ſo much that I could hardly ſupport myſelf.—

He was quite offended.

"I ſee plainly that I ſhall never have your heart, Miſs Heber, tho' you have mine."

What could I do, Alicia? I was aſhamed to tell him that he had it, leſt he ſhould have aſked for ſomething which could not be granted.

In this manner he frequently ſerves me, and then runs to lady Avon, and will not ſpeak to me for an hour or two, perhaps; tho' he ſees I am ready to die with vexation for having made him ſo angry.

Thus

Thus am I continually perplexed—Do, tell me, my Alicia, how I ought to behave to this inconſiſtent, charming man?

Doſſy ſhakes her head at me, and bids me beware of men—She even gave a hint that ſhe feared Sir Charles did not love me as well as I loved him.—I was weak enough to cry the whole day after that ſpeech.

He caught me in tears; and was ſo ſoothing and tender, that I had all the reaſon in the world to be ſatisfied with him. To obtain his pardon (tho' I was not angry with him—I could not be angry) he gave me his picture in miniature.—If I could bring myſelf to part with it a moment, I would ſend it to you, that you might ſee I am not too partial—But I can't ſend you his voice, his wit, his enchanting manner of ſaying and doing the moſt trifling things—How various are his powers of charming, of which I cannot make you ſenſible, by deſcribing them! From what I have ſaid,

however, you may be able to give me your opinion; and then I ſhall ſee whether it agrees with my Eudocia's or my own.—Surely ſhe *cannot* be diſpleaſed at his prepoſſeſſion in my favour—She thinks him agreeable and lively; but I am certain that tho' ſhe loves to talk and laugh with every body, lord Avon is the unrivalled poſſeſſor, the ſole maſter of her heart.

LETTER

LETTER XXV.

Lady Avon to Miſs Heber.

EXCUSE me, my dear friend, for not having correſponded with you ſo regularly as I ought to have done—Were you here, and I ſincerely wiſh you was here, you would be convinced that leiſure is very ſcarce among us—I, at leaſt, find my hours prodigiouſly taken up; and yet I cannot give a very good account of myſelf in the employment of them.

We ſpend the day, and, I believe I may ſay, a great part of the night here, in a very pleaſant manner: but whether we ſpend our time in a rational manner, I will not determine.—I have ſomething elſe to write about.

I am, at preſent, under a real concern for our dear Olivia.—You know how af-

fectionately I love her—She is, I am afraid, too much attached to a man, of whom I have not the beſt opinion, tho' I will allow him to be agreeable;—but what are the moſt pleaſing accompliſhments, when they are not accompanied with virtuous principles! Not that I am abſolutely ſure of his being entirely deſtitute of thoſe principles; but from his conduct, I cannot help entertaining ſome doubts, which I would freely communicate to Olivia, were not a great deal of delicacy neceſſary in the communication of them, in order to prevent a diminution of our friendſhip.—However, tho' I cannot properly tell her what I think, I can open my heart to you; and then you will naturally act with your uſual good ſenſe and propriety upon the occaſion.

Soon after my marriage, Sir Charles Sedley, in the character of my lord's friend, was introduced to me:—As his lordſhip had carried me to Sir Charles's houſe, during

during his abſence from England, from the maſquerade, common politeneſs required his admiſſion at his return. He is, undoubtedly, agreeable, and has an eaſy becoming careleſſneſs in his behaviour, which apologizes for half his foibles—Yet he is, by no means, a man to be truſted—At firſt, I myſelf, from not being acquainted with his licentious diſpoſition and free way of thinking, treated him with more conſideration than he deſerved: and ſince—to confeſs the truth, my Alicia, lord Avon took it into his head to ſuſpect me of encouraging this very man—His ſuſpicions provoked me ſo much, as I knew myſelf to be perfectly innocent, that I believe I carried my reſentment a little too far; for tho' I have not the ſmalleſt inclination for Sedley, he has diſcovered but too much his partiality to me; and diſcovers it even at the very moment while he is pretending to make honourable addreſſes to Olivia, who is as much in love with him as ſhe

can poſſibly be.—Were I, therefore, to endeavour to make her ſenſible of the more than impropriety, the infamy of his conduct, by enumerating all the little artifices he has had recourſe to, in order to deceive her, under the flimzy pretence of ſecuring my friendſhip purely on her account; ſhe would, moſt probably, imagine that I either really liked him myſelf, or that my monſtrous vanity induced me to conclude he actually preferred me to her. My frankneſs would, conſequently, rather leſſen me in her eyes than be of any ſervice to her.

I ſometimes think that were I to inform my lord of my ſuſpicions, he might, with much propriety, ſpeak to Sir Charles, and let him know that he was not ignorant of the indiſcreetneſs of his behaviour.—But then, will not my lord's ſuſpicions be confirmed; and may not the life of a man, whom I love more than my own, be endangered in a duel?—No other way is left for me but this—I have acquainted

quainted you with the exact ſituation of things here at preſent; and I beg you would act as you think beſt with regard to Olivia, and inform me of your ſentiments.—

If you mention what I have written to you, that Sir Charles, tho' a lively, agreeable man, is not likely to make a deſirable huſband, my private conſultation with you will be diſcovered. — I give you leave, however, to diſcloſe what I have told you, or what other hints you judge proper to apprize her of her danger. — I really begin to imagine that Sir Charles does not intend to marry at all. — But, in ſhort, you would give me the greateſt pleaſure by coming up to town, and ſtaying ſome time with me.—Come and ſee us all together: you will then ſee with your own eyes whether I am right or wrong.

My lord frequently aſks me when he is to have the happineſs of being acquainted

with my other agreeable friend—Come, therefore, my dear Alicia; anſwer for yourſelf, and fly to increaſe the felicity of,

Your ever affectionate,

E. AVON.

LETTER

LETTER XXVI.

From the ſame to the ſame.

AS I have not heard from you, agreeably to my expectations, and as Sir Charles ſtill continues to impoſe upon Olivia with his pretended addreſſes,—the poor girl begins to be very wretched on his account—I have taken a ſtep, which you may, perhaps, think an odd one.

I have communicated my thoughts on this affair to Mr. Mountney, who is come to town for a few days—My lord, I know, repoſes a confidence in him, and he ſeems to have a ſincere friendſhip for us both—He has an abrupt way of behaving ſometimes; but he may, I believe, be depended upon. Beſides, he is a great admirer of Olivia, and would be very ſorry to ſee her unhappy.

When I told him that I imagined Sedley had no honourable deſigns on any woman, but inclined to take advantage of the whole ſex;—he replied that he was extremely glad to find I ſo perfectly underſtood his character—"Since you have done me the honour, madam," continued he, "to place ſo much confidence in me, I hope you will give me leave, in return, to be very free with your ladyſhip—As lord Avon is certainly not a litle affected by your permitting Sir Charles's aſſiduities, let me intreat you, without being thought impertinent, to ſuffer them no longer."

"Had my lord never diſtruſted me, Sir," ſaid I, "he would have had no reaſon to complain; for I was as much above encouraging Sir Charles's freedoms, as he was uneaſy at them—But I was hurt at being ſuſpected; neither could I bear to occaſion a difference between my lord, and the man whom he called his friend. My lord muſt have a very ſlight opinion

of

of me, indeed, to ſuppoſe that I meant to encourage any thing more than a little amuſement with Sedley. I know how to hinder him from taking any farther liberties with me; but I can't prevent his impoſing upon my dear Olivia, who is too partial to him, to look upon him in the light I do; and ſhe may, poſſibly, think me guilty of the greateſt want of affection, in attempting to deprive her of a lover ſo dear to her."

Mountney then told me, that he believed he could come at Sir Charles's real deſigns; but added, very ſeriouſly, that the diſcovery might occaſion a little bloodſhed, perhaps, before it could be prevented.—

Having uttered thoſe words he hurried towards the door, to procure the information I had ſeemed deſirous to receive.

I caught him by the arm, "Stay, Sir, for heaven's ſake," cried I, "do not throw yourſelf and your friends into ſuch dangerous ſituations, meerly"—

At that moment, while I had hold of Mountney's arm, my lord came in.

I coloured (ſince I was ſuſpected, I am become quite a coward) and let Mountney go—who flew out of the room, hardly taking notice of my lord.—

"What's the matter?" ſaid my lord, looking earneſtly at me, "what mighty ſecret is there between you?"

"No ſecret at all," replied I, ſmiling, in order to try him, "cannot you truſt me with your and my beſt friend?"

"And why your beſt friend, Eudocia? can you have a better friend than myſelf?" ſaid he, with a look of ſuch anxious tenderneſs, that I actually felt for him: yet I could not help telling him "that he was always too ſerious about things which only excited my mirth.—"But come, my lord," continued I, "do compoſe yourſelf: if Mountney is your friend he muſt be mine alſo: you are jealous of every man who ſpeaks to me: when do you ſee me jealous of you? Were you to ſay twenty fine ſoft

things

things to Olivia, or any other woman, I ſhould not give myſelf a moment's concern about it."

"You will never have occaſion, as I can ſee nobody half ſo amiable as you."

"Oh, you flatterer!" ſaid I, "while you are finding fault with my conduct, how can I believe you?"

"Not finding fault, Eudocia; only wondering at it; we may wonder when we moſt admire—

"And when we leaſt approve—but come, my lord, let us call another ſubject."

And ſo, my dear, I inſtantly turned the converſation.—By the above dialogue which paſſed between us, and which I aſſure you is truly matrimonial; ſo much experience have I gained by living in the world, you will ſee that the deareſt of friends, and the fondeſt of lovers, will think very differently at different times, and in particular ſituations; and that I muſt, to avoid giving any uneaſineſs, converſe with no male or female,

male, with no human being; as he loves me too well to let any body look at me, or ſpeak to me.

Certainly, the maſquerade-night was the happieſt night of my life—I have never been the ſame free, unconfined creature ſince; and ſo I have told him a thouſand times.

Thus you ſee, Alicia, a woman may be loved too much as well as too little.—Poor Olly never dreams, I dare ſay, of being too much loved.—However, if I can but make this Sedley appear to her in his true colours, I ſhall not mind a little bruſh with my lord about *my* ſecret.—By ſerving my friend, without endangering my huſband, I ſhall be ſufficiently rewarded; when my lord is acquainted with my motives, he will, perhaps, thank me for my conduct; though, on ſecond thoughts, he may even then, be offended at my being obliged to any body but himſelf.—'Tis actually a pity that a man ſo amiable in every other reſpect, ſhould be ſo extremely narrow in his ſen-

ſentiments upon this one point—and yet could he ſee my heart, and know how highly I prize him—But I have ſaid enough to put you out of conceit with men: ſo adieu!

IN CONTINUATION.

OLLY has, this moment, entered my dreſſing-room, with a letter in her hand from you—She was very unwilling to ſhew it to me, as it contained your entire diſapprobation of Sedley's addreſſes to her as a lover, without the conſent of her father.—You could not have put the affair upon a better footing.—I ſhould have behaved exactly in the ſame manner to her myſelf, had I not been apprehenſive of her ſuppoſing that I wiſhed to engroſs all his flattery. She is juſt now in a terrible dilemma, and has aſked my advice.—I declared freely that I was of your way of thinking upon the occaſion—I could very decently, you know, be your ſecond—and ſhe has promiſed—but feebly—to hear him no more till he is authorized

thorized by her father—I much doubt, however, whether a ſingle glance, his eyes being very ſeducing, would not overturn all her reſolution in a moment. I wonder why men have ſuch power given them only for miſchievous purpoſes: if lord Avon had not been much ſuperior to Sedley, by the brightneſs of his eyes, as in every other ſhape, I had been ſtill, I believe, unmarried.—I ſhould have felt no ſorrow—no care—I ſhould have been thought innocent, as I really am—whereas now, every look, every word, every action, muſt be guarded.

Mountney is gone out of town: till he returns, therefore, we have nothing but Olivia's own fortitude to truſt to; and fortitude is not frequently met with in a girl who is violently in love. Once more, adieu.

LETTER

LETTER XXVII.

Lord AVON to Mr. MOUNTNEY.

I NEVER was truly wretched till this moment—Now my miſery is complete!

I have been very much to blame—my behaviour has been wrong—I have acknowledged it: I have owned myſelf to be highly cenſureable, and have implored forgiveneſs—no acknowledgments, no conceſſions, no ſollicitations have any effect upon her: ſhe is inexorable, and I am undone.—Come, therefore, dear Mountney: you may, perhaps, by interceding for me, procure the ſo much wiſhed-for pardon.—But, in the firſt place, hear the crimes of which I have been guilty.

You are no ſtranger to my ſuſpicions concerning Sedley, ever ſince he diſcovered himſelf to be ſo extravagant an admirer of Eudocia's charms.—Who, indeed, can behold

behold her, who can liſten to her without the higheſt admiration?—But he diſcovered too much ſenſibility, too much paſſion; and you well know how I feared that he might, as he has bright parts, and never at a loſs for language, have ſaid ſomething to make an impreſſion on her mind, fatal to my repoſe. His behaviour has been certainly ſo very particular, ſo extremely inſinuating, that I felt a thouſand terrors, leſt that behaviour ſhould prove as ſucceſsful as he, undoubtedly, wiſhes it to be.—You will ſay, perhaps, that I have been ingeniouſly tormenting myſelf with the wild ſuggeſtions of an alarmed imagination.—But to the point—

When I came home laſt night, I enquired immediately after my lady; "where is ſhe, Bingley?"

Bingley anſwered, "In her dreſſing room."

I flew up ſtairs, with all the eagerneſs of love—as I think every minute an age, till I behold her, after ever ſo ſhort an abſence.

When

When I came to the door I found it a-jar, and heard her and Olivia talking very faſt.—

As a large ſkreen concealed me from them, I ſtopped, in order to be acquainted with the ſubject on which their tongues were employed.

With a voice moſt enchantingly ſoft, Eudocia cried, "Is he not charming?"

I ſtarted at this interrogation: who is this charming he?—

I was abſolutely diſtracted with jealouſy and rage; and ſtill wilder to know who this fellow was of whom my wife ſpoke ſo feelingly.

Juſt as I was determined to riſque every thing for a diſcovery, I perceived the candle glimmer through a hole in the ſkreen.

I fixed my eye cloſe to it, and ſaw both their heads together, hanging over a miniature which my wife held in her hand. I was ſure it could not be my picture, becauſe that which I preſented to her was much ſmaller, for her bracelet, and ſet with diamonds;

monds; and therefore concluded it to be Sedley's, which he had given to my wife, though till then, I thought he had given it to Miſs Heber.

Stung with a fury which I could no way conquer, I ruſhed into the room; and without allowing Eudocia time to make her defence, flew out into the moſt violent invectives againſt her and Sedley.—I repeated loudly what I had juſt heard her ſay; and accuſed her, in the moſt violent terms, of being falſe to me, falſe too with the man who was of all men the leaſt likely to deſerve to return her love. I curſed, in the bittereſt language, not only him, but myſelf, for being ſuch an egregious fool as to ſuppoſe her capable of meriting the ſincere and tender paſſion I had, from the firſt commencement of our acquaintance, felt for her; and which I was ſenſible, I told her, I ſhould feel, in ſpite of her caprice and ingratitude, to the laſt moment of my exiſtence, though I could tear my heart from

from my boſom, for having brought ſuch exquiſite miſery upon me.

With ſuch ſevere expreſſions I walked up and down the room, ſmarting under the agony of my mind.

They both ſtared at me, and at each other alternately, as ſtruck with the greateſt aſtoniſhment, at my behaviour.

You may well look, madam, but by heaven! I have ſaid far too little about a crime of which you cannot but be conſcious; a crime never to be atoned for.

I ſtopped here at laſt—meerly for want of breath—

Throwing myſelf into a chair, I felt my ſpirit ſo agitated, that I was hardly alive.

For ſome time they ſuffered me to remain in this tortured ſtate.

At length, my Eudocia came up to me with the picture in her hand, and ſaid, "After all you have uttered againſt me, my lord, I might certainly be excuſed from making the ſlighteſt attempt to undeceive you: eſpecially as I know myſelf to be entirely

tirely innocent: but I have too great a regard for my own reputation, to let it remain queſtionable, after having been ſo unjuſtly vilified. I will, therefore, convince you of your raſhneſs, and the abſurd impetuoſity of your carriage; aſſuring you, at the ſame time, that you ſhall never treat me in the ſame manner again."

She then held up the miniature to my eyes.

What words can expreſs my aſtoniſhment, when I ſaw my own portrait, in the dreſs I wore at the maſquerade!

"There, my lord," ſaid ſhe, "it is your own picture which you ſee, and which has thrown you into ſo furious a paſſion. Your behaviour has been in the higheſt degree unpardonable, becauſe nothing was ſaid or done on my ſide, juſtly to provoke it. Recollect, my lord, that I aſked you for your picture in your maſquerade dreſs, the dreſs in which I firſt ſaw you; recollect alſo that you excuſed yourſelf by ſaying that you did not like to wear it for life.

You

You now will wear it for life, my lord; and I wiſh you may not repent of your unjuſtifiable proceedings, as bitterly as I do of my connections with ſo capricious, ſo jealous, a man."

With theſe words ſhe left me rooted to the floor, and pierced with emotions not to be conceived.—Struck with the outrage which I had committed againſt reaſon and againſt juſtice, I hurried after her into her chamber, which Olivia quitted on my entrance.

Throwing myſelf at her feet, I, in the moſt ſubmiſſive and earneſt terms, implored her pardon.

She ſeemed to ſhake me from her, and at the ſame time ſaid, "Riſe, my lord: if you lie here till to-morrow, you will not alter my reſolution; it is fixed—I will no longer ſtay with a man who ſuſpects me of the moſt ridiculous of all follies, as well as of the groſſeſt of all crimes; and who can neither reſtrain his jealouſy nor his anger, within the bounds of decency."

She

She then would have flung from me out of the room; but I crept after her on my knees, holding her by her gown, and ſwearing by every thing ſacred, that I never would leave her till ſhe forgave me for a crime of which I had been guilty from the exceſs alone of my love for her.

I talked to no purpoſe: ſhe looked down upon me with a cold, with a freezing indifference, which ſtabbed me to the ſoul. Had ſhe been irritated, I ſhould have hoped, that on the abatement of her anger ſhe would have relented; but her ſteady calmneſs diſtracted me: I deſpaired of a reconciliation.

I roſe, and walked up and down the room, agitated almoſt to madneſs—She, very compoſedly, wiſhing me a good night, was going to leave me; I ſtopped her inſtantly, crying, my life, whither are you going: it is late. I will retire while you undreſs.

"You need not go," ſaid ſhe, "I ſhall ſleep with Olivia."

"Then I ſhall never ſleep again," cried I; "but by heavens! you ſhall not leave me; you are my wife, lady Avon, and I have, as a huſband, a right to inſiſt upon ſharing your bed."

"When you are in your ſenſes, my lord," replied ſhe, calmly, "you ſhall ſhare it; but I will not truſt myſelf with a madman."

"I am not mad, indeed I am not, my deareſt," ſaid I; "greatly have I been miſtaken, and much too warm, but my repentance and ſubmiſſion will, I hope, make amends for all my offences. Do not, do not think of leaving me, my Eudocia, unleſs you are determined to drive me abſolutely to deſpair.—You ſee I am calm and penitent; but if you attempt to deprive me of the bleſſing I have enjoyed ever ſince you were mine, of paſſing the night by your ſweet ſide, you know not to what deſperate action you may impel me; for not all the powers on earth ſhall force you from my fond arms."

" I ſwear then, in my turn," ſaid ſhe; while her bright eyes almoſt ſtruck fire, " that I will not ſleep in the ſame bed with you this night."

" You ſhall not then, my angel—I will ſit up, and watch by your ſide every night, till your dear relenting heart obliges you to pardon and receive a miſerable wretch, baniſhed from your arms—to pardon me for a behaviour, occaſioned entirely by the uncommon ardor of my affection.—I will call Loyd, however, to undreſs you, and retire to another apartment, in the mean time.

She made no anſwer.

I rang the bell.

When Loyd came in at the chamber door, I double-locked it, and putting the key in my pocket, left her.

I did not hear my lady ſay any thing to her woman, who in leſs than half an hour came thro' the dreſſing-room to go down ſtairs.—

I ſaid

I ſaid not a ſyllable to her—Hurrying into the chamber, I was extremely ſurprized to ſee Eudocia ſitting quietly in a chair, in her night-dreſs.

I declared the utmoſt ſurprize at finding her ſtill ſitting up, and had recourſe to all the eloquence I was maſter of, to prevail on her to go to bed as uſual. All my eloquence was inſufficient; I talked to no purpoſe. She poſitively refuſed.

I was now in an agony not to be deſcribed, leſt ſhe ſhould by a firm, by an obſtinate adherence to this reſolution, injure her health: eſpecially as the adherence to it might, in her condition, prove fatal.

No words can paint the anguiſh of my mind, when I reflect upon my paſt raſh, impetuous conduct; I ſhuddered to think of the dreadful conſequences which might, poſſibly, which would, probably, reſult from it.—

For above two hours, I am ſure, I was upon my knees, intreating her with the

tendereſt, the moſt affectionate importunity, not to hazard her health by ſitting up beyond the uſual time; ſwearing ſolemnly, that tho' I ſhould be ſupremely wretched in feeling ſo ſeverely the weight of her reſentment, I would patiently remain with her if ſhe would but try to get a little reſt.

At laſt ſhe roſe.

I offered to help her to undreſs, as ſhe told me that ſhe had diſmiſſed Loyd for the night, except any new outrage on my part ſhould oblige her to call for aſſiſtance.—

She begged me to let her alone, and to retire into the adjoining room, ſince I inſiſted upon her going to bed: but proteſted that if I came near her, ſhe would run to Olivia's chamber, and ſee me no more.

I ſubmitted to every thing, in order to preſerve her health, which I prized at ſo high a rate, and concerning which I had the

the moſt alarming apprehenſions; and, after a reaſonable abſence, returned.

I then threw myſelf into a chair by the bed-ſide, and ſpent the night in a ſtate of mind not eaſily to be conceived.

The poor, dear, ill-uſed creature never ſlept at all: yet made ſhort, ſometimes no replies to what I ſaid to her: and before the cuſtomary hour of riſing, intreated me to leave her, as ſhe was going to ring for Loyd.

I again conjured her to pardon me, or, at leaſt, to promiſe me forgiveneſs, when ſhe thought I had ſuffered ſufficiently for what I had done; and begged as hard for a ſingle kiſs, as if I had been begging for my life.—

She made no anſwer, but buried her ſweet face under the bed-cloaths—So that finding I only wearied both her and myſelf, I left her, and ſent immediately to deſire your company.

To my unſpeakable vexation, I was informed that you was out of town.

As neither my wife nor Olivia came to breakfaſt, as uſual, when I had waited till I was tired, I rang the bell, and bade Bingley enquire if his lady breakfaſted above or below.—

He replied that my lady and Miſs Heber were gone out of town.

Imagine the ſurprize and ſhock which this intelligence gave me!—I repeated the poor fellow's words (who looked almoſt as much aſtoniſhed as myſelf) ſeveral times, before I even thought of aſking whither they were gone, curſing myſelf all the while for being ſuch a blockhead, as to ſit in the back-parlour without ſuſpecting her of having had ſuch a deſign.

I then aſked him, with as little ſharpneſs as I could upon the mortifying occaſion, (for I knew he had a regard for me) how he came not to inform me that his lady was going out of town; and when ſhe gave orders for the carriage?

In

In anſwer to the firſt queſtion, he ſaid, that he was ignorant of my not being to go with her; and to the ſecond, that while I was dreſſing, ſhe ſent Loyd to bid John get the poſt-chariot and four horſes ready, immediately, to go a long journey; adding, that when ſhe got into the chariot, ſhe ordered the drivers to carry her to Barnet, with all poſſible expedition.

Only conceive how this information, after what had paſſed between us, diſtreſſed me! I ſunk back in my chair, overwhelmed with grief, ſhame, and remorſe.

When I had given ſtrict commands to be denied to every body but you, I ſat down to write; and I now intreat you to come to me as ſoon as you have read this letter—Come, and conſider with me what method I can can take, which will be the moſt likely to ſoften the heart of my dear offended girl.—

Oh! Mountney! what would I give for the return of thoſe moments, when

I flattered myſelf that I was beloved almoſt as well as I loved !—Could they but return—But my brain is diſordered—I ſicken at reflection—My pen drops from my hand.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

Mr. MOUNTNEY to Colonel ACKWORTH.

AS you was with me when I received lord Avon's letter, and expreſſed your concern with an uncommon warmth of friendſhip upon the diſagreeable occaſion, juſt too when we were both going to ſee him; I have taken up my pen, to give you the deſired information, with regard to our tranſactions in ſo diſpleaſing an affair.

I really found him much worſe than I expected. He was pale, and ſunk, and had ſuch a tremor upon his ſpirits, that I was exceſſively alarmed.

In the firſt place I intreated him to go to bed, and to ſend for a phyſician; it was a conſiderable time, however, before I could prevail on him to comply with my requeſts: nor would he comply with

them, till I had promiſed to wait on my lady, and to endeavour to bring about a reconciliation—But till we had diſcovered her route, nothing could be done towards the completion of his wiſhes.—Before I came, indeed, my lord had heard, from a meſſenger whom he diſpatched in purſuit of her, that ſhe breakfaſted at Barnet, in the way to Derby.—

On his acquainting me with that intelligence, I ſtrove to perſuade him to make himſelf eaſy and to get well—"I will go down after her directly, and ſay whatever you wiſh me to ſay to her."

Inſtead of being ſatisfied, agreeably to my expectations, he roſe and replied, "You ſhall not go alone: I will accompany you."

The doctor, who that moment entered the room, and to whom I communicated his reſolution, declared that his life would be in the greateſt danger, if he attempted to travel; that he was in a high fever, and

that

that ſuch a journey would inevitably kill him.

I made no reply till the doctor was gone, and then told him that I would ſet out poſt, overtake my lady, and bring her back directly.

"You talk, my dear friend," ſaid he, "in a kind, in an affectionate manner, but you do not know to what a degree ſhe is incenſed againſt me—She will never return—no—I will go with you; and if I cannot move her to pity, and to forgive me, die at her feet—I feel I cannot live without her—She is my life, my all."—

I was obliged to be peremptory—"You ſhall not go, I ſwear, by every thing ſerious; but if you will be governable, and keep yourſelf quiet till to-morrow, and conſent to take ſome gentle remedies, I will venture to ſet out with you, provided you will agree to make the journey by eaſy ſtages."

With the utmoſt difficulty I brought him to let me carry my ſcheme into execution, on thoſe conditions; and, notwithſtanding his violent impatience, got him within a few miles of Thorn-Wood, in three days; tho' he made me almoſt mad with his furious and peeviſh expreſſions againſt the ſlowneſs of my movements.—

When I had proceeded ſo far, I perſuaded him to reſt where he was, while I went and enſured him a good reception.

He ſhook his head, and being exceedingly ill, was but juſt able to tell me what he wiſhed I would ſay from him to Eudocia.

I found Eudocia at Thorn-Wood, an old ruſtic manſion; part of her grandfather's eſtate, and of her jointure.

She received me very politely, on my ſending in my name—Nobody was with her but the pretty little loveſick Olivia, who looked like a beautiful corpſe.

I ſoon

I ſoon opened the buſineſs I came about, telling her to what a condition my lord's raſhneſs and her reſentment had reduced him; telling her that if ſhe perſiſted in refuſing to come to any accommodation, ſhe would, in a very ſhort time, be a widow; as he was already ſo dangerouſly ill, that the doctors could not give any hopes of his recovery.

She ſtarted—her fine face glowed like crimſon in a moment, and was alternately pale and red—She trembled all over.

I actually enjoyed her diſtreſs—Don't call me ill-natured: for tho' Avon was wrong, he is a worthy fellow, and ſhe certainly puſhed her reſentment too far—Reſentment is a paſſion highly unbecoming in the fair ſex; it robs the moſt beautiful woman of half her charms, and often hinders admiration from ripening into love.—This lovely creature, however, enchanted me, while I condemned her.—

She turned from me, as if deſirous of hiding her emotions, and then aſked me if I was ſerious—"Is my lord really ill; or have he and you together concerted a ſcheme to bring me back to London, and to draw me in to place a confidence in a man who has already ſo groſsly deceived me?"

"Faith, my lady," ſaid I, "what I have ſaid with regard to his lordſhip's illneſs, is abſolutely true; nor have we concerted any ſcheme together, of which we ought to be aſhamed: the ſtate of the caſe is plainly this—Lord Avon is but a little way off, and is ſo very much indiſpoſed, that the continuation of your indifference and your anger, will certainly put an end to his life."—

"Where, where is he?—I will go to him,"— ſaid ſhe, exceſſively fluttered.

"Hold, madam," ſaid I, "it will be better for you to let him come to you, if you pleaſe; for I cannot anſwer for the conſequences of ſuch an interview—

Diſcre-

Diſcretion requires it to be in your own houſe, in which he can be more eaſily accommodated than upon the road."

"Aye, that's true," replied ſhe; "but can he travel ſo much farther? No—no—I'll go to him."

"My dear lady Avon," ſaid Olivia, burſting into tears, and flying to take her round the neck, "How this conſideration for him makes me honour you!"

Was not that prettily ſaid by Olivia, Ackworth? But ſhe is a ſweet, gentle creature—However, I ſtill inſiſted upon bringing my friend home.

"Be quick then, Sir," cried my lady—haſten yourſelf, "but do not hurry my dear lord, Mr. Mountney."

I told her ladyſhip that he might depend upon my care; but that her kindneſs and condeſcenſion would be the only efficacious remedies for the preſervation of a life which hung upon her lips.

I then returned to my friend, who changed colour when ſhe ſaw me approach.

"Will

"Will ſhe ſee me?" ſaid he, faintly: "Oh! tell me; if ſhe will not ſee me, I have nothing to do but to leave a world in which I am certain of being ſupremely wretched."

I deſired him to rouze his ſpirits, and to hope the beſt—I did not chuſe to ſay too much about her altered carriage, her promiſing behaviour, leſt ſhe ſhould wear another face when he made his appearance. Beſides, I knew that the meeting would be, on both ſides, affecting; for he was ſo touched with my bidding him prepare to go to Thorn-Wood, that I was forced to give him ſome drops, to put him into a condition to ſet out.

At laſt we arrived.

I led my lord to her feet, for he could not ſupport himſelf, pale, trembling, and diſordered as he was all over.—

He juſt reached her as ſhe roſe to receive him, and then ſunk upon the floor, without ſpeaking a ſingle word.

She

She ſeemed exceedingly ſhocked at the ſight of him in ſuch a ſituation.

I endeavoured to raiſe him, while the gentle Olivia reached a chair.

Eudocia ſat down in it, and ſtooping to my lord, laid his head on her lap—Then, taking his hands in hers, ſhe preſſed them frequently to her lips.

Opening his languid eyes, on receiving thoſe unexpected proofs of her tenderneſs, he cloſed them again, while he graſped her hands, and cried, with a deep ſigh, "Can my Eudocia forgive me?"

"She can, ſhe can—She does, my lord," replied ſhe, ſtifling her emotions as much as poſſible.—

She then turned to Olivia, and ſaid, "Do, my dear, order a bed to be prepared this moment."—"You don't ſit very eaſy there," continued ſhe to him; "do, Mr. Mountney, help me to raiſe my lord."—

I aſſiſted her immediately, and we led him to a ſopha, on which ſhe ſat down by him,

him, threw her white arm round his neck, and while he reclined on her ſhoulder, called him her love, her life, her dear Harry.

I cannot deſcribe his ſenſations; I can only ſay that they were too violent to be endured; he fainted away upon her boſom.—

As ſoon as he recovered his ſenſes, he was carried to bed—She ſat by his ſide, with his hand faſt locked in her's, while he poured forth, tho' in a feeble voice, the warmeſt effuſions of gratitude and love for her returning kindneſs.

Upon my ſoul, Ackworth, they touched me in the tendereſt part, and I am not given to the melting mood neither.—But I could have been glad to have been ſo careſſed by the fair Olivia.

I begin to have a ſtrange inclination to ſit down with a kind girl, in a quiet corner ſomewhere.

Prithee anſwer the queſtion I aſked before all this buſtle happened, if you

can—

can—Is it poſſible for Sedley to be in earneſt with Olivia; or is ſhe only employed as a convenient perſon to facilitate his ungenerous deſigns, to ſpeak of them in the ſofteſt terms?

THE END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.